

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 \*

\*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: DANNY RYLOTT  
Battalion Chief

West Taney County Fire Protection  
District 7  
Branson, Missouri

Wednesday,  
July 25, 2018

## APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] National Technical Assistant  
Investigation National Center of Expertise  
U.S. Coast Guard

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

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:00 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise with the NTSB. It's July  
4 25th at 15:00, and we're at the West Taney County --

5 MR. RYLOTT: Fire Protection District.

6 MR. MUISE: -- Fire Protection District Station 7  
7 investigating the incident with the Stretch Duck 7. So, Chief,  
8 can you just tell us your name, your position, and spell your name  
9 too for us.

10 MR. RYLOTT: I will. My name is Danny Rylott, R-Y-L-O-T-T.  
11 I'm a Battalion Chief with Western Taney County Fire.

12 MR. MUISE: Commander?

13 LCDR [REDACTED] Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] INCOE,  
14 USCG.

15 TROOPER [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Missouri State Highway  
16 Patrol Marine Division.

## INTERVIEW OF DANNY RYLOTT

17  
18 BY MR. MUISE:

19 Q. So, Chief, can you just in your own words tell us, tell us  
20 what you saw that night? What, or what, you were on scene, right?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay, yeah.

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Tell us what you saw, what you heard, you know?

25 A. I pulled up. We're, I think, I don't know if you guys, your

1 background of the way we work. The incident happened in Stone  
2 County in an area that you have to get to by coming through Taney  
3 County. So a lot of times we're automatic mutual aid there even  
4 on everyday calls, medicals, or fire alarms, or whatever. So,  
5 working at that location is not unusual to us. So we were  
6 dispatched as a mutual aid company to Southern Stone County Fire,  
7 and, for a water rescue team. And that's all they requested.

8 Thursday night is our training night, so we had guys out and  
9 about in trucks and off doing different things. And so we ended  
10 up with some resources there that we normally wouldn't, a couple  
11 of Engines, and a Rescue, and different things, but that was  
12 mostly just to get the people that we needed to the scene.

13 I arrived first from our Agency. There was at least one  
14 Southern Stone County Unit on the scene, but they were toward the  
15 front of the boat, or the Showboat trying to see if you can gain  
16 access there. I went down to the service access, which is the  
17 closest driving access to the, to the lake, and figured that was  
18 the closest point to go.

19 When I pulled up, I seen several people, not responders, but  
20 several people. Couldn't tell who they were at first on the  
21 paddlewheels of the Showboat, trying to make their way up, and it  
22 looked like there was crewmembers helping. And they were trying  
23 to remove people from the paddlewheel area onto the deck of the  
24 Showboat and onto the dock of the Showboat, as well as the  
25 Showboat had their little small tugboat parked right in that cove

1 there. There was some people on that. There was a lot of  
2 activity everywhere, which we were expecting, you know, to show up  
3 and see 31 people in the water with life jackets on, we were going  
4 to bring our boat around the corner, scoop them all up, and off we  
5 went. You know, that's kind of what had in our mind going over  
6 there.

7 And when we arrived, I met, was met with one gentleman that  
8 was looking for his son. He was soaking wet. I assumed he was on  
9 the, on the Duck, and he come to me, he said, "My son's supposed  
10 to be over here. Where's he at? Where's he at?" Of course he was  
11 panicked and everything. And we're like, we just pulled up, we're  
12 trying to find him.

13 And so, we started to gather as our other responders were  
14 arriving at first, just some of our guys in POVs being volunteers,  
15 they come in, but they still had medical equipment. We pushed  
16 them forward to the dock area of the Showboat. And then the  
17 ambulance arrived from Taney County and went, they went forward as  
18 well.

19 I stayed there thinking this is a big incident, we need to  
20 get a command post set up as quick as we can. So I held there at  
21 that location, at my staff car, and started to try to gather  
22 resources to that location knowing that was the best place to be.  
23 We can access to the Duck through, by, or to the water there with  
24 the ramp and the shoreline, access to the dock, and access to the  
25 Showboat as well.

1 My chief arrived after me, came to me, kind of got a face to  
2 face. We were sending responders forward, and we weren't getting  
3 any information back, numbers, anything. So he's like, why don't  
4 you go see what's going on. Try not to get too involved in  
5 patient care, but go see what's going on. So I went forward and  
6 was just met with, you know, we're doing CPR in the bow, we're  
7 doing CPR inside, there's this going on there, there's people over  
8 there, and we really had to start making heads or tails of where  
9 everybody was.

10 One problem that we had, as we were, that was when our first  
11 main larger group of responders was hitting the dock. We had two  
12 or three others on the dock already. We were met with, the  
13 passengers of the Showboat were being dismissed, coming off the  
14 gangplank along with people from the Duck. And so we were trying  
15 to figure out who was who, who was what. And just because they  
16 were wet didn't mean they were on the Duck. It had been pouring  
17 down rain, several people had jumped into the water to help it  
18 sounded like, and so just because they were wet didn't mean you  
19 could separate them by that. So we had to talk to almost, really  
20 it was, okay, you're wet, were you on the Duck? Were you on the  
21 Showboat? You know, what?

22 And we worked our way through that, staging people at the  
23 shore and at the gangplank, starting to pull the people that were  
24 on the Duck off to that side and use that as our triage area. And  
25 then, of course, quickly we learned that we had some fatalities,

1 started putting numbers together, and locations of those  
2 fatalities. My first knowledge of fatalities was the boy that was  
3 in the back of the Showboat. The second was the person that was  
4 on the bow of the Showboat. Three and four were the two that are  
5 on the tugboat. And then, five was one that was transported over  
6 to the state park marina by a private boat. And then, let's see,  
7 and I think there was one more. I didn't know where it was, where  
8 that, where that one more was. And then we pulled three up later  
9 on in the dive operation. Talk about that later.

10 So pretty quick we kind of, it was walking wounded, or they  
11 were dead. I mean, there was one red patient that the ambulance  
12 triaged as red and transported right away. She had had CPR done  
13 on her by somebody, we don't know who. They assumingly gave up,  
14 the ambulance went over, checked on this person, had agonal  
15 breaths, and they worked her, and I guess she went to the hospital  
16 and was doing fine last I heard. Go figure, huh?

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Yeah.

18 MR. RYLOTT: Some of that, I didn't know any of that on  
19 scene. That was stuff we figured out at our critical incident  
20 debriefing afterwards, and kind of, we heard stories from the  
21 hospital, stories from the ambulance crew, and were able to put  
22 that together. But I did not know that at the time. I just knew  
23 that there was an unconscious patient that they were really  
24 working on hard, and that was the only one they were really trying  
25 to attend to, and so we helped them move that patient quickly to



1 the shore. And that person had come from the paddlewheel area.  
2 So I would imagine that that was, you know, along with the rest of  
3 them, that was a pretty tough area to be in.

4 And then, really the hardest part for us was trying to figure  
5 out the numbers. A, how many we had to account for, second, how  
6 many were injured, which we quickly learned it wasn't too bad, but  
7 because that number wasn't too bad, we knew there was a lot of  
8 people missing, you know? But we didn't know, did they sink? Or  
9 did they walk up into the parking lot? Did they, you know, where  
10 did they go?

11 So we started helping the ambulance crew and the law  
12 enforcement both. Everybody kind of pitched in, and we went  
13 through the landing area of the Showboat where the shops are, I  
14 don't know what you call that, and then the parking lot, we sent  
15 people through there. And pretty quickly we couldn't come up with  
16 anybody else. We, probably over 45 minutes, maybe an hour,  
17 probably more like even an hour and a half we come to the number  
18 of, we needed 31, we were missing 9, and had 7 injured and 7  
19 uninjured. Everybody else was a fatality.

20 And then the decision was made by somebody in law enforcement  
21 that they wanted to bring all of the fatalities to the ramp, to  
22 the Duck ramp there, to the boat ramp there. So different people  
23 from different organizations got together and started moving  
24 fatalities over to there from the Showboat, from the tugboat, and  
25 from the state park. They went and got that person and brought

1 them back to that location as well, which is not very far, so that  
2 they were all back there together to be picked up at a collection  
3 point.

4 Moving forward from there, I went back to, once we had all of  
5 the patients cleared from the Showboat dock area, and then it was  
6 down to the fatalities left out there, I went back to the command  
7 post. Our chief was taking part in the, kind of, the best as put  
8 together unified command there, still working under Southern  
9 Stone's command. And, but everybody, all the commanders were all  
10 pretty much within a shouting distance of each other there. And  
11 then we, they started making decisions about what we should do.  
12 That's when they decided to move the victims.

13 And then our boats were running sonar. They found a couple  
14 of spots they wanted to dive, command okayed them to dive, they  
15 dropped down three times. The first time they didn't find  
16 anything, maybe a little bit of fresh debris on the bottom, things  
17 that weren't mossy and stuff, and trash mostly. And then the  
18 second time and third time they found victims, and I'm not clear  
19 of how many they found which time, but we recovered three people  
20 from the water, clearly recovery mode and not in any kind of  
21 rescue mode because that was quite a ways into it. It was well  
22 after 8:00 before they were diving. And we dove those three  
23 times. I think they finished their last dive at 11:15 kind of  
24 timeframe.

25 By that point, I was trying to help take care of getting

1 some, just times noted, or different, just, you know, keep track  
2 of things at the command post, and really shifted to be more of a  
3 law enforcement cop at that point, you know, after about 8:00.  
4 And we were doing things to help them. Our divers, I know, never  
5 located the Duck itself. They had seen it on sonar a couple of  
6 times, but what they told me -- I was not out on the boat, so I  
7 don't know, but what they told me, at one point, they saw it at 40  
8 feet on the sonar. The next time they saw it, it was in 50 feet  
9 on the sonar. The next time they saw it, it was deeper than that.  
10 So they think it was moving, which it could have been. It's  
11 pretty steep right in there, so it could have still been setting  
12 up. And that's probably why they didn't see it.

13       They had zero visibility to 5 feet at times in some  
14 locations, but most of the time, one of our divers even told me,  
15 he said, there was one time I tried to check my air, and I  
16 couldn't see even the gauge with it in front of my deal. And I'm  
17 like, well it's probably time to do something different.

18       So that's kind of my story of what went down. It was not at  
19 all what we expected, and probably the biggest MCI deal that we  
20 had to deal with. You know, we trained for them for the airport,  
21 and for the, different things, and never thought that would be the  
22 case over there, you know?

23       BY MR. MUISE:

24 Q.   Can you talk a little bit about, more about your dive team,  
25 how they were organized, who they report to, what, how, what do

1 they have for equipment?

2 A. Yeah. Our dive team is made up of volunteer firefighters.  
3 Our whole organization is volunteer firefighters. We have -- a  
4 little background about our department first. We have a pay  
5 chief, two assistant chiefs, two volunteer battalion chiefs, so  
6 five chief officers. And then the battalion chiefs are  
7 volunteers, and then we have some maintenance people and stuff,  
8 but when it comes to the actual firefighters, we're all volunteer.  
9 So there are different backgrounds. Some of them are --  
10 firefighters from all walks of life.

11 Some of our divers more specifically are either guys that  
12 recreational dive for a lot of years, or maybe worked in dock  
13 industry, and doing some, you know, a little bit of light  
14 commercial diving. We don't have anybody that's like a big time  
15 commercial diver, anything like that. And they have to take a  
16 rescue diver class to be a diver for us. And they do that either  
17 through PADI or through Dive Rescue International. And then they  
18 keep that up, they train, diving four or five times a year.

19 So it's not a huge everyday kind of thing or anything, and we  
20 probably dive on calls twice or three times a year. You know, not  
21 too much. So that's, as far as the divers, that's what they have.  
22 They have simple scuba equipment I would call with a pony bottle  
23 as a backup and a separate regulator, you know, that kind of  
24 stuff. They dive in wetsuits. We don't, we do have some  
25 drysuits, but they don't do that unless it's super winter.

1           And they dive pretty limited. We don't, we try not to dive  
2 deeper than 80 feet unless we have a really, really good ping or  
3 something like, or a reason to go there. So we try to stay pretty  
4 shallow. Generally we don't have a don't dive at night rule, but  
5 if it's night, it has to be a pretty good reason to, and not too  
6 much debris that they would get into, that kind of stuff. And  
7 that's -- they kind of make that decision amongst, between the  
8 divers that are going to be diving and whichever chief officer is  
9 with them.

10           Their dive chief that's in charge of the water rescue team is  
11 our Chief Single, but they, he's just kind of more of the  
12 management of the team. He's not a diver himself or anything like  
13 that. They have a couple of firefighter captains that are both  
14 probably their senior divers, and they run the dive part of it.  
15 We dive when we're in rescue mode a little bit, we dive a lot to  
16 help out the water patrol, especially early on because they don't  
17 have divers readily available in this area, so they, working with  
18 them, they allow us to dive. A lot of times we dive with their  
19 blessing to do so before we do any diving. And then, if they're  
20 like, no, don't worry about it, we quit. I mean, we're kind of  
21 working for them at that point.

22           Once it's a recovery, we really are working to help them.  
23 And if we can, on a more typical call than this, you know, it's a  
24 drowning, or a boat deal, and we had a great point last scene, or  
25 we pinged something on our sonar, they'll dive down, and if they

1 get it, great, it solves them from having to bring people from  
2 Jeff City or beyond, or whatever to come down since it's more than  
3 that kind of thing.

4 Q. Do you think, does the dive chief have a report that's, would  
5 tell us where he found the passengers?

6 A. No. They would just be, they know, I mean, I can show you  
7 where they were when they went down in relationship to the  
8 Showboat, but I think when they dove and actually found the  
9 passengers, they were tied up to the back of the Showboat.

10 Q. Oh.

11 A. So they were very close to the Showboat.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Captain Ryan was one of the divers, and Captain Geenwy (ph.),  
14 they would know better than I, but I do know they were horizontal  
15 distance less than 50 feet from being tied off to the back of the  
16 boat, of the Showboat, so they weren't very far. And in that  
17 horizontal distance, they dropped and did circle searches from a  
18 rope when they came across those guys. And in that circle search,  
19 they never made it deep enough to where the Duck was, eventually  
20 found. I guess you guys found it around 80 feet or whatever. So  
21 they never made it to that depth while they were doing their  
22 circle search. I don't think they made it, based on the way they  
23 said it was steep, I don't think they made it more than 15, 20  
24 feet from where their anchor diver was. So, they, two of them  
25 went down, one of them sat still, let them go around with a rope,

1 give them a little rope, go around with the rope, and they said it  
2 was really steep. So they were up and down, you know, trying to  
3 do that, and I don't think they made it horizontally very far at  
4 all from the other diver that was the center point of their  
5 circle.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. So if you had Showboat, our boat, they probably sunk down  
8 somewhere within a short distance of our boat and then a little  
9 bit of a rope search off of that. They couldn't have been very  
10 far from the back of the Showboat.

11 Q. Zero vis, what depth was that at?

12 A. They were talking to me, they were in the 40 to 50 foot range  
13 and made it no deeper than 55 foot on their entire dive on all  
14 three dive, so they were up on the hill.

15 Q. The collection point you said, is that the north ramp where  
16 the Duck exits?

17 A. Yes, the north ramp --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- where the, where they were headed, yeah, behind the  
20 paddlewheels there. And that's right where the, you know, they  
21 kind of had the, our incident command post and everything was set  
22 up there on the service road by the, for the Showboat. And then  
23 that ramp is 15, 20 feet to the north of where that service road  
24 is.

25 Q. Your chief, was he, describe the relationship between your

1 chief and the Southern County Command, Southern, I'm sorry --

2 A. Southern Stone --

3 Q. -- Southern Stone County.

4 A. -- County, yeah. I'll give you a little review how that  
5 whole command deal was. I got there, established command not  
6 knowing that they had a chief there because he was in a different  
7 location.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Up on the, above the building, is that  
9 correct?

10 A. Yeah. He was, he was up on the upper level south of my  
11 location on the other end of the parking lot. After I was there a  
12 few minutes, started to send firefighters forward not knowing that  
13 he was there, he then came back to my location figuring out that,  
14 this isn't where I need to be, and he came back to that location,  
15 and then he was within that area. He, he's probably not the best  
16 one to stay in one spot. My chief arrived, and we were trying to  
17 fit in, and so he's like, I'll stay here, you go forward and start  
18 working. And then he was just trying to, these bigger incidents,  
19 I think our chief is probably a little more solid to them than I  
20 think, McNevin is. So he was trying to help him, feed him, you  
21 know, along with what to do knowing that it's in their area, we're  
22 clearly in their jurisdiction, they're here, although, we try to  
23 take part of a unified command the best we can. So we kept the  
24 chief there, which happened to be our chief, after I went up to  
25 the Showboat. And then once all of the other, like the sheriff



1 got there, somebody from the water, or the highway patrol was kind  
2 of taking the lead, I don't know who that was, but I'm sure some  
3 kind of seniority person. Both sheriffs, the water patrol person,  
4 representative from TCAD, they're the ambulance district, they  
5 kind of all within the, I think they were making decisions, hey,  
6 would it be good if we did this? Yeah, that sounds good. Off  
7 they go, you know, kind of thing. After I was done up on the  
8 dock, I was kind of like, you know, no pun here, but the guy  
9 without a boat to be in. I'm just kind of like, well I'm going to  
10 stand around. Our, Chief Single went out with our boats and was  
11 helping them just to kind of, guide that group, or that operation  
12 with doing the sonar, and then feeding back information. Hey, we  
13 have dive points, can we dive? Yes you can dive. He was on the  
14 boat too, on our Boat One doing that. And then we had eight or  
15 ten firefighters available to do whatever, and I was kind of  
16 trying to keep them corralled up, because there wasn't really  
17 anything more for the firefighters to do. Once we transported the  
18 seven patients, they made arrangements, a shuttle for the seven  
19 that weren't injured, and there was kind of not much else for us  
20 to do on the shore. But we didn't want to turn them loose yet  
21 either, because, what if we needed some help, you know? So they  
22 ended up more being in the way than anything. And at that point,  
23 it really became more of a law enforcement, wait for their do or  
24 don't do kind of thing. And I think that decision was, they,  
25 working under them, it was okay to dive. If you see something,

1 great, but be cautious and only dive if you're comfortable. I  
2 think that was, many times I heard that. And they did. They  
3 chose to, and I think that was a little bit of, we've got to do  
4 something kind of thing. And our guys are, they want to, I don't,  
5 it's hard to say, but they want to prove themselves too. I mean,  
6 because they're, they like doing what they do, they practice for  
7 it. So they were just glad they at least found one of them, and  
8 then they happened to find three, so all the better I guess in  
9 their eyes. So --

10 Q. So, given all of that, what level of ICS training do you guys  
11 have?

12 A. Our chiefs have to have 100, 700, 3, 4. I think our chief,  
13 chief has almost all of them --

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. -- if not, yeah. I mean, plenty of NIMS training. So --

16 Q. Your firefighters and your drivers, they were responding to  
17 POVs, or took an apparatus with you?

18 A. Some of each. We had --

19 Q. What'd you have for --

20 A. We have our dive equipment. Apparatus wise, we had our  
21 Rescue 77 which is our water boat truck. We had Boat 1 and Boat  
22 3. Boat 1, we keep on the state park, it's on the water all the  
23 time, it's at, kept at State Park Marina. And then Boat 3 is kept  
24 in Hollister on a trailer and a brush truck brings it out, and  
25 they launched from the State Park launch ramp there. And then we

1 ended up with our heavy rescue truck there, it wasn't assigned,  
2 they just, they were out and in it, and so they came. And then  
3 the Engine, again, wasn't assigned, they were just out it in. And  
4 it came mostly for the people, because the people that were on it  
5 were water rescue people. Those trucks came, and that, and then  
6 two staff cars, three staff cars, and a small handful of POVs.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Anybody hurt on your team?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Your department? No?

12 A. Nope.

13 Q. Do you guys run EMS?

14 A. We do first response for the ambulance. So we have first  
15 responders, everybody on our department has to be a first  
16 responder or, and then probably, I don't know exactly on the  
17 people that where there, but, about another 25 or so of our guys  
18 are either EMTs or paramedics.

19 Q. The triage protocol that they followed, that they follow, is  
20 the same as --

21 A. Taney County.

22 Q. -- Taney County and all?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. So you guys all use the same --

25 A. We all use --

1 Q. -- protocol?

2 A. -- the same protocol, the same medical control, everything.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Tell me about MOSWIN.

6 A. MOSWIN?

7 Q. Yeah.

8 A. The, MOSWIN statewide interoperability, or statewide radio  
9 system. The highway patrol, I'm, see if I can get this right.  
10 The highway patrol out of our area, the sheriff's department,  
11 Taney County Sheriff's Department are the only ones, well,  
12 Hollister PD, but they weren't there, they all use that as their,  
13 they have their own channels on that. We have access to that on  
14 some of our staff cars. Mine that was there does not, but our  
15 chief is also the emergency management guy, so he had a handheld  
16 with MOSWIN on it, so we had it over at my truck. My truck was  
17 the truck parked closest to kind of where all of this was going  
18 on.

19 Q. So who made the decision to switch to VTAC 11?

20 A. This is the way it kind of went. The ambulance had gone to  
21 VTAC 11. We were initially on our channel three, but then went to  
22 Southern Stone's tactical channel and did some communication back  
23 and forth with our boats, stuff that, dive related, we talked on  
24 channel three a little bit. The sheriff's were still on their  
25 main channel, I think the highway patrol guys that were there were

1 still on whatever main channel they talk on. But I don't think it  
2 was ever really an issue. A lot of times, communications is this  
3 huge thing, nobody can talk to anybody. But patient care-wise,  
4 everything we did, we did face to face, you know, working with the  
5 ambulance side by side right along with their, they had a captain  
6 there that was their supervisor on scene, and then, and working  
7 with their crews. Just like we do every day, it wasn't, it was  
8 just a little more of it.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Communication with Southern Stone wasn't really an issue  
11 because we have their tac channel, we went to that to talk to  
12 them.

13 Q. Okay, so speaking of that. So this facility is in Stone  
14 County, Taney County Ambulance is the first responding EMS --

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. -- routinely?

17 A. Routinely.

18 Q. But for fire --

19 A. We --

20 Q. -- that's not the case? Stone County responds?

21 A. Stone County responds and mutual aids us, and then we respond  
22 too. Most of the time we beat them, but some sometimes we don't.  
23 Depends on --

24 Q. Where's the closest apparatus?

25 A. Our Station 12 --

1 Q. Is closer?

2 A. -- is closest by far.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. But it's still their call. It's their responsibility, their  
5 district. So they get the call, you, if you dial 911 from the  
6 Showboat, it's going to go to Stone County. Stone County, what's  
7 your emergency? Okay, we got a fire here. They're going to  
8 dispatch their unites. Part of their run assignment is to send a  
9 truck from us.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. So they send their units, call our dispatch, our dispatch  
12 sends whatever they ask for, and off we go.

13 Q. So, I counted, you said, seven, the transport, there was  
14 seven green tags that were released?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And eight black tags, that's 22.

17 A. We ended up with nine missing.

18 Q. There was nine missing?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. So, and then the state recovered four the next day?

21 A. I think they did two during the night and four the next day.

22 Q. Okay. So they were all accounted for then, if my math is  
23 right.

24 TROOPER [REDACTED] I don't know if we're completely matching  
25 up. The --

1 MR. RYLOTT: You guys got six total.

2 TROOPER [REDACTED] Yeah.

3 MR. RYLOTT: Two in the middle of the night --

4 TROOPER [REDACTED] Yeah, the --

5 MR. RYLOTT: -- four the next day.

6 TROOPER [REDACTED] -- fatals are adding up. I'm not sure  
7 about the seven, what'd you say? Seven transported and what?

8 MR. RYLOTT: Seven transported and seven that were released  
9 and taken back to the Duck dock.

10 TROOPER [REDACTED] Yeah, that adds up.

11 MR. RYLOTT: Yeah, 14 and --

12 MR. MUISE: And 17.

13 MR. RYLOTT: And 17.

14 TROOPER [REDACTED] Yeah, that, sorry.

15 MR. RYLOTT: Yeah.

16 BY MR. MUISE:

17 Q. And lastly, weather. Tell me what the weather was before --

18 A. Before and after?

19 Q. Yeah, before you were toned out --

20 A. Well, I'll just tell you what, I'm going to just tell you my  
21 opinion on the weather. At 11:00, my son, or at 11:30 my son had  
22 a physical therapy appointment, and I was walking in the door and  
23 my phone goes off for a severe thunderstorm watch until 9:00. And  
24 I thought, until 9:00? Good night, that's a long time, but okay.  
25 So got done there, looked at the radar, nothing. A little while

1 later, I looked at the radar, storm up by Kansas City, kind of  
2 interesting. And then 3:00-ish, 4:00-ish, somewhere in there, we  
3 were discussing Bolivar was getting hammered with a little storm,  
4 which is north of Springfield, an hour north of Springfield, which  
5 is an hour, no later, generally speaking. And we thought, man,  
6 that was kind of interesting.

7 And our chief, being an emergency manager guy, he was, they  
8 put out something on their deal that the state EOC was going to  
9 stay open longer because of the weather, and not go home at 5:00  
10 like they normally do, and we thought that was kind of  
11 interesting, you know? Well, it's going to storm tonight.

12 So I had left here at 5:00 and made it to my house, and I  
13 live in the southern part of the district. And I left there to go  
14 to training, we had training at 19:00, and I was headed back to  
15 town, and it was black to the north. And I was a little running  
16 behind more than I normally had, so I was about five minutes until  
17 7:00, I remember thinking, woo, it's dark up there. It's going to  
18 storm pretty good. So I decided, instead of going, we were  
19 supposed to train up close to this location. I thought I'm going  
20 to hold up in Hollister because I was the duty chief. I'm going  
21 to see what's going on.

22 So I pulled into our Station 1, which is on the way to the  
23 airport where the, I think they moved the Duck over there to the,  
24 to the county airport, that, you know, by Herrman Lumber there,  
25 our Station 1 is right there. So I went there and it was blowing



1 really, really, really hard. And I'm going to, I hate putting my  
2 gear on in the rain. So I grabbed my gear, went inside the  
3 station, put my gear on. I thought, we're definitely going to a  
4 call or something, you know? So I put my gear on, I got back to  
5 my car, I'm like, and then it started raining, a long time. It  
6 was like, 10, 15 minutes after the wind first started really  
7 blowing hard. And then we got based on to the power line down  
8 call, so off I go to that.

9 Just as I'm pulling out of Station 1, our all call goes off,  
10 which is what has to be done to get the divers because there's,  
11 divers are on different stations. So we have individual station  
12 tones, and then we have an all call, which trips everybody's  
13 pager. So they do that, and I'm thinking in the back of my head,  
14 oh, they're going to issue a tornado warning or something, because  
15 that's what they do to tell everybody there's a tornado warning,  
16 and they're like, water rescue, 30 people in the water. And so I  
17 did a u-turn and drove from there out to the, to the location.

18 Q. In your staff car?

19 A. In my staff car.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. That, we met a few trees down, driving in rain, you know?  
22 But it didn't take me that long to get there, it's not that far.  
23 Stone County's chief I think was already there, there was some  
24 other boats around from the State Park Marina either picking up  
25 people or taking people off the paddlewheel a little bit, or

1 couldn't, at first didn't know for sure what all was going on, and  
2 then we kind of picked up from there. Within a couple of minutes,  
3 their boat, the Stone County boat got there, and I think there  
4 was, not by, I don't believe any faults, Stone County was getting  
5 hammered with their own type of calls, power lines down and  
6 everything else, there was probably almost ten minutes difference  
7 between their dispatch and ours. But I think by the time they got  
8 through to get to out dispatch and our dispatch got it out, and it  
9 took a little time. And I think that's why they got there two or  
10 three minutes after I did, which I thought was pretty quick. So  
11 I'm like, hey, they got the jump on it.

12         Again though, I don't think that, I think the Showboat crew  
13 pulled anybody that was anybody out of the water before we,  
14 anybody first responder wise got there. Between the Showboat crew  
15 and the boats from the marina, I don't think anybody was in the  
16 water when we got there, that was on the surface. I think they  
17 had already pulled everybody out, which is an applause to them, I  
18 mean, and they had to have been kind of paying attention, and I,  
19 something I noticed off the, you know, the YouTube videos and  
20 everything out there, you know, they had that Showboat full of,  
21 stern, it looked like trying to hold it on the dock. And once  
22 these people were in the water, they had to have, think quick  
23 enough to stop that with these people that close to the back of  
24 the boat. And, I mean, I kind of would have to say, hey, hats off  
25 to the crew at the Showboat on getting as many people as they did

1 up onto the boat, onto the Showboat prior to our arrival. I mean,  
2 rescue-wise, there was nothing to be done when we got there.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. That was all done.

5 Q. Do you know was -- doing CPR, the one red tag you told me  
6 about?

7 A. No idea. It was, I'm pretty sure that the CPR happened on  
8 the little walkway between, either between the back of the  
9 Showboat and the paddlewheel or the little walkway between the two  
10 paddlewheels, because eventually that person got put into a Stokes  
11 basket and brought around over to the dock, and that had already  
12 happened. There's a YouTube video of that person being brought  
13 around the corner of the Showboat, and then TCA's captain going  
14 over to him and starting to attend to him.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And their captain never did CPR. It had happened prior to  
17 that, and I think it happened around the back of the Showboat deck  
18 where the paddlewheels are, either between the paddlewheel and  
19 the, and the wall of the --

20 Q. A male --

21 A. -- back of the Showboat.

22 Q. A male patient?

23 A. No, it was female.

24 Q. A female?

25 A. Yeah.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. An older female patient. And then, or in between the two  
3 paddle wheels.

4 Q. Okay. I know what you're talking about now.

5 A. Yeah.

6 MR. MUISE: Commander?

7 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

8 Q. You mentioned Thursday night training. Do you ever, is this  
9 an internal or is it an aids and partners event?

10 A. We have, three Thursday night trainings are assigned to each  
11 individual, and they attend as many as they can. The first one is  
12 a station level training, so the first Thursday of the month is  
13 our normal station level training. So the station captain or  
14 officer can decide whatever it is they want to train on. The  
15 second and third Thursday nights are our district level training  
16 where our training chief puts on some kind of training. The first  
17 Thursday night half the district goes to, the second, or the, so  
18 that's the second Thursday of the month. The third Thursday night  
19 of the month the other half goes to. So half go to the first one,  
20 half go to the second one so we don't have too many people.

21 And those trainings are driven kind of by the training chief,  
22 and our insurance services people, they drive a lot that we have  
23 to do mutual aid training to keep our ISO rating down, which is  
24 what rates fire departments across the country. So four times a  
25 year, we train with some other fire department and/or TCA. For

1 instance, we did, one of those Thursdays we, or one of those  
2 district training nights we moved to a Saturday so we could do a  
3 mass casualty drill for the airport so that they could keep their  
4 airport stuff that they have to do. They have to, every three  
5 years have to do a full scale exercise.

6 So just this spring, we did a full scale exercise for 80  
7 patients at the, at the airport. So yes, we train with the  
8 ambulance crew, and then the fourth Thursday of the month, we do  
9 truck check night, where the, they have to go through all their  
10 equipment, make sure everything's running, find any problems, all  
11 that stuff. And if there's five Thursdays then we have, usually  
12 have some kind of social event, and so that happens a couple of  
13 times a year, you know, where we end up with five Thursdays. So  
14 those two middle Thursdays are the ones where, are district  
15 training driven.

16 And this month we were doing, because it's hot, they tried to  
17 do, steer, we were meeting at the Boys and Girls Club, which is  
18 basically an indoor gym, and we were doing some fun activities  
19 wearing out gear, though, but wearing our PPE, wearing our CBA,  
20 those kinds of things, and they never even got started. I mean,  
21 they were watching the weather as well. They were like, well,  
22 let's hold off, see what happens, then, and then, you know, we all  
23 split up to go 20 different directions because we had, not only  
24 did we go to help them with the Duck incident, I think we had five  
25 or six calls related to the weather in our own area. So, I mean,

1 everybody got split up, called every which way.

2       So we train a lot. We train, medical training we do usually  
3 in January and February, district training, and it's, January we  
4 do CPR, February we do some kind of other thing. This year, we  
5 had the OTC, that was our technical college, they brought out some  
6 really fancy manikin dummies that would bleed, and talk, and you  
7 could feel pulses on, and they had somebody talking from the other  
8 room. And it was pretty cool as a patient assessment stations and  
9 stuff. So, no, we do some cool stuff training wise.

10 Q. Ever train with Coast Guard Auxiliary? No --

11 A. Never have.

12 Q. -- interaction?

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. Are you aware of their activity on Table Rock Lake?

15 A. I, myself, very, very limited. I do know that they have  
16 something or do something. Our chief is probably a little more  
17 aware, but that's about as far as that goes. We do, at least, me  
18 personally, when I've gone out our boat and on, checked off on our  
19 boat, and we go out in different times, and we try to make sure  
20 that when we go out we chat with the Showboat on the Coast Guard  
21 channel just to keep that line of communication over, and open,  
22 and different things. So we try to, you know, keep that open.

23       We do, you know, right now, and maybe you don't know, Sunday  
24 nights, they're doing fireworks for the Showboat just to boost  
25 attendance I guess to the Sunday night shows. So we have to go

1 out and do a standby for that, for the fireworks. So they,  
2 usually somebody goes out on our boat too, and they talk to the  
3 Showboat, and, just to, you know, that helps. You know, everyday  
4 communication, make sure that you can do it in a, in an emergency  
5 situation. As far as I know, I've never talked to a Duck when  
6 they've been out there. We, but, you know, we try to wave and be  
7 friendly and whatever, but that kind of situation.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

9 BY TROOPER [REDACTED]

10 Q. Yeah, a couple of questions. It, some of this might be  
11 hindsight, but when you started, you mentioned like, 30 people in  
12 life jackets and 30 people in the water. When did you get a head  
13 count of how many was on that Duck? And that's what I mean, that  
14 30 --

15 A. Yeah, when did --

16 Q. -- headcount?

17 A. -- I find out the 31?

18 Q. Yeah, or what was your initial number now that I'm asking --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- you to think about it?

21 A. Thirty was what our dispatch told us.

22 Q. From the get-go?

23 A. From the get-go, 30 people in the water, Duck capsized, half  
24 of our guys that were responding thought that they said dock  
25 capsized, so we were trying to figure out how there was there 30

1 people on a dock. Nobody, I think those people weren't even  
2 expecting it to be a Duck. I was pretty sure they said Duck, but,  
3 what, you know, I mean I could see how that could change your  
4 mindset of where you're, where you're going and what you're doing.

5 After I was on scene and all that, and then I got sent  
6 forward, we knew pretty quick we had to start working on finding  
7 some numbers of how many people we were looking. I mean, that was  
8 clear. And the 31 number kept coming up over, and over, and over  
9 from different people. And I'm like, the more you hear it, the  
10 more it's got to be right, you know what, it's that kind of  
11 mindset.

12 And one of the ambulance guys was tending to the captain, and  
13 I think knew he was the captain, or knew he was on, you know, an  
14 employee from the boat, and I think that number really came from  
15 them. But I didn't myself talk to that person.

16 Q. All right.

17 A. You know, I think, you know, that number I think really came  
18 from them by talking to him. And I'm, it was a long time, well  
19 over an hour before we knew for sure, probably more like closer to  
20 two hours. I think, to the point that they even sent somebody to  
21 the Duck dock to find out about the picture, and one, two, three,  
22 four, five, you know, and before we really knew we were looking  
23 for exactly 31 people. I think we had, that was always the best  
24 guess, but until they did that, I don't think they every knew 100  
25 percent, you know? I think we got into the 90 percent sure that



1 31's the number, but I don't think we ever knew until they went  
2 and counted the people in the picture.

3 Q. Okay. And another question. And the, I wondered if this  
4 came from any emergency training you had done with the Ducks or  
5 about the Ducks, but you mentioned 30 people. You kind of had  
6 envisioned 30 people in life jackets or whatever floating when you  
7 got there, which wasn't the case.

8 A. True.

9 Q. Did that come from any kind of training, or safety brief you  
10 had seen them have, or anything like that that --

11 A. No. I think that was --

12 Q. -- crafted that picture in your head?

13 A. I think that popped into mind as to best case scenario maybe,  
14 you know, in our mind of what we had hoped. It wasn't certainly  
15 because, well I mean we know that they have life jackets. I mean,  
16 I've ridden the Ducks before, so, you know, I know that they have  
17 life jackets on the boats. I know that, I figured that the  
18 weather's that bad, certainly if they were out there they would  
19 have put them on, but, or at least talked about it or something.  
20 But, so I don't, that didn't really come from anything that I had  
21 seen them do or seen them talk about. That was just maybe our, I  
22 guess really deep down, probably our hoping.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. You know? It probably really was. Now, my place or not to  
25 say it, I'll say it. You know, the, they interviewed the lady. I

1 went and talked to that lady, the African American lady that lost  
2 all her family, the nine people. I forget her name. And she says  
3 that, they told us that we have life jackets, but you're not going  
4 to need them. And I distinctly remember when I rode the Ducks,  
5 and it's been quite a long time ago, more than five years, them  
6 saying that, right before we go on the water, they stop, you know,  
7 hey, we're going to go on the water, we're going to go splash,  
8 you're going, you might get a little water in the back, here's  
9 life jackets, but, you know, in the unlikely event of an  
10 emergency, there's the life jackets, but you're not going to need  
11 them. That's, I think that's just more of a comforting  
12 conversation.

13       That's my two cents on that, but I think that probably wasn't  
14 said when the boat's doing this in the water and really rough.  
15 That was probably said before they went in the water, but that, I  
16 don't, because I remember, I remember that, you know, especially  
17 after we start thinking about this, you know, that yeah, they  
18 always talk about that the life jackets are there. I mean, it's  
19 just like when you go to a show and they talk about there's the  
20 fire exits, in the unlikely event of an emergency, there's the  
21 fire exits. When you go to the movie, they put it on the thing,  
22 you know, if there's an emergency, use the fire exits. Well, it's  
23 the same thing I think with the Showboat. Maybe they're supposed  
24 to talk to them, maybe that's something you guys mandate that they  
25 do, I don't know. But I do know when I did it years ago, that's

1 what they said.

2 TROOPER [REDACTED] You answered my question. Thank you.

3 MR. RYLOTT: Yeah.

4 BY MR. MUISE:

5 Q. Just one follow-up on the same question. When you rode the  
6 Duck, did they demonstrate putting a life jacket on?

7 A. No, I don't think they ever took one out. I think it was,  
8 the life jackets are here, if we need them, we'll hand them out,  
9 or, you know, in the unlikely event of an emergency, this is where  
10 they are.

11 Q. Did they talk about how to get out of the Duck?

12 A. Not when I rode. That was, yeah, I don't, well, we were,  
13 that was quite a long time ago.

14 Q. Sure.

15 A. I don't distinctly, them saying anything about how to get out  
16 of the Duck.

17 Q. Was it after 2001?

18 A. Probably not.

19 Q. Before 2001?

20 A. Yeah. Because I want to say, it's probably longer than I  
21 thought.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Time flies when you're having fun. I know we rode it when we  
24 got married, when our whole families all came to town, we got  
25 married in '99. And I want to say we rode them once after that,

1 but I don't think my kid's ever been on them, and so, my kid's 13.

2 Q. Okay. That --

3 A. So it's --

4 Q. -- gives me a timeline.

5 A. -- been quite a while ago. I don't think my kid's ever been  
6 on them. So --

7 MR. MUISE: Commander, any follow-up?

8 LCDR [REDACTED] No follow-up for me, sir.

9 TROOPER [REDACTED] No.

10 MR. RYLOTT: Yeah.

11 TROOPER [REDACTED] I think I've got everything.

12 MR. MUISE: Chief, do you have anything else you want to  
13 share with us? Or --

14 MR. RYLOTT: No. I have dash cam video of my truck when I  
15 pulled up and park. If you've got a jump drive or something, I  
16 can dump it on there.

17 MR. MUISE: Please.

18 MR. RYLOTT: There's no audio with it, but it's dash cam  
19 video, and it shows --

20 MR. MUISE: That's fine.

21 MR. RYLOTT: -- you can, about half of the view is blocked by  
22 the fence, but you can see the paddlewheel.

23 MR. MUISE: That's fine. The more puzzle pieces --

24 MR. RYLOTT: You know?

25 MR. MUISE: -- the better. Yes.

1 MR. RYLOTT: It might --

2 MR. MUISE: How about a --

3 MR. RYLOTT: And it --

4 MR. MUISE: -- (indiscernible) run report?

5 MR. RYLOTT: -- the dash cam video, I put it on there from  
6 when I left my house going to training, so you could see the  
7 weather too.

8 MR. MUISE: I would appreciate that too.

9 MR. RYLOTT: The conditions in Hollister.

10 MR. MUISE: Yes, please.

11 MR. RYLOTT: And that's, so I put that on there, so I can  
12 jump that, dump that into a jump drive for you guys.

13 MR. MUISE: Sure, absolutely.

14 MR. RYLOTT: And then our run report, I'm, I can print it. I  
15 think I had just finished it yesterday, or earlier this morning  
16 really. So I have that, I just need to get it printed.

17 MR. MUISE: Okay.

18 MR. RYLOTT: And you can have a copy of that too.

19 MR. MUISE: Okay. It's 15:46.

20 (Whereupon, at 3:46 p.m., the interview was concluded.)

21

22

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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

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.



Christy Wilson  
Transcriber