

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

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CAPSIZE AND SINKING OF STRETCH DUCK 7 \*

ON TABLE ROCK LAKE, BRANSON, MISSOURI, \* Accident No.: DCA18MM028

JULY 19, 2018 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: GERRY MAROTTI

Monday,  
July 23, 2018

## APPEARANCES:

JOHN VOLPE, Marine Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

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I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Gerry Marotti:	
By Mr. Volpe	4
By Sgt. [REDACTED]	27
By Mr. [REDACTED]	29
By Mr. Volpe	35

P R O C E E D I N G S

(2:28 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. VOLPE: Okay, it's 14:28 on the 23rd of July. We're  
4 going on the record. My name is John Volpe, I'm with the NTSB  
5 Marine Investigation Division and I'm with Gerry Marotti.

INTERVIEW OF GERRY MAROTTI

6  
7 BY MR. VOLPE:

8 Q. Gerry, could you please state your name and spell it?

9 A. Gerry Marotti, M-a-r-o-t-t-i. First name, G-e-r-r-y.

10 Q. Thank you. And could you give me your position with --

11 A. A driver for the ducks.

12 Q. Driver for the ducks, okay. Could you please just give me a  
13 little bit of your work history?

14 A. With the ducks?

15 Q. Well, with the ducks or if you were a driver on a boat  
16 previously.

17 A. I never have been --

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. -- a driver on a boat. I was only land.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I'm qualified just for land and I've been with them my third  
22 year.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. I've done over 1500 trips.

25 Q. Okay, were you always only a driver with --

1 A. Right.

2 Q. -- Branson?

3 A. I was a driver.

4 Q. Never anywhere else in the company? Were you a CDL driver  
5 previously to joining?

6 A. I was.

7 Q. Do you have any background?

8 A. Well, no, I'm on land only.

9 Q. Okay, land only. Okay.

10 A. On land only.

11 Q. Okay. Let's begin with just starting your typical day --

12 A. All right.

13 Q. -- when you go into the office. Can you, in your own words,  
14 explain --

15 A. Okay, what we do --

16 Q. -- how your day is?

17 A. -- is the captain and me would go out to the ducks and we  
18 inspect, we got a list of everything, what we check off and we  
19 would check the inside first, check the hull inside, check the  
20 pins and everything inside the hull and then we would take it down  
21 to a pad and crawl underneath and check everything out. That was  
22 the captain and me and then a mechanic, he's to do it, too --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- before we do it. It was night shift. And if any little  
25 thing was wrong, we would have it fixed at night.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. You know, like a light bulb out or a brake light or  
3 something, we always had it fixed or we would carry it down there  
4 at the shop right then and have it fixed.

5 Q. Do you fill out any paperwork when you do those?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Yes?

8 A. Yes, we do.

9 Q. Okay. And who do you give that paperwork to?

10 A. We put it in a slot in the office.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. We put it in a slot and our name is on it, the captain's name  
13 is on there.

14 Q. Um-hum. And how often are you a driver with the ducks?

15 A. I work about four to five days a week.

16 Q. And typically, how many trips do you drive?

17 A. In a year with them I drive about 530 trips.

18 Q. Okay, can you just break it down weekly or daily for me?

19 A. Well, we don't work all year round, so --

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. -- some months it's slow or like in the summertime, right now  
22 we do four, up to six trips a day.

23 Q. Four to six trips a day, okay.

24 A. Four to six trips a day now in the summer.

25 Q. Okay. So following your inspection of the duck with the

1 captain and you guys submit your paperwork --

2 A. Right.

3 Q. -- where do you go from there?

4 A. We go in a lineup, you know, we have Duck Number 1 out first,  
5 and 2, just whatever how we lined up. We have a schedule, like.  
6 I'll show you an example. And you just get in or where we're  
7 supposed to be at. Like right here, have our names and which duck  
8 we're on that day. They took a lot of (indiscernible), that's how  
9 it goes and so you stay up in order during the day.

10 Q. Okay, just for the record, it's a daily lineup he's showing  
11 me on his phone for -- that tells him where he is in the lineup  
12 for his jobs and what duck they're going to be on.

13 A. Right. And the time of -- you know, at this time of year,  
14 some people got to be there at 7:45, some 8:00, 8:15, so they give  
15 us plenty of time, like, to get the duck ready.

16 Q. Okay. Once you get the duck ready, you're in your lineup,  
17 now it's time to receive passengers. Can you explain your duties  
18 when you receive passengers?

19 A. Okay, we wait until it's our time. Sometimes it's an hour,  
20 sometimes it's two hours that we wait --

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. -- in the lounge and then we go out and the passengers, they  
23 get on, on the duck.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. And we tell them a safety thing right then on the duck after

1 everybody is seated.

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. And then when we get to the water, we tell them another  
4 safety, how to put on the life preserver and all the safety on  
5 that. Not to smoke or chew or stuff like that we go through and  
6 we tell -- it's a different one for a duck for kids, for babies,  
7 you know, for small ones, 30 pounds, whatever. There's three  
8 different kinds of life preservers and we show them how to do it.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Just pull a tab and it falls down and how to put it on. And  
11 the captain, he'll get up there and he'll put it on and show them.

12 Q. Okay. Do you assist the passengers getting up, when they get  
13 on the boat prior to you departing?

14 A. Sometimes I do.

15 Q. Sometimes you do?

16 A. Sometimes I tell them, you know, just come up to the front or  
17 something.

18 Q. Okay. At this point are you actually sitting in the driver's  
19 seat when they're boarding?

20 A. I am.

21 Q. You are.

22 A. I'm sitting in driver's seat, most of the time I'm sitting in  
23 the driver's seat.

24 Q. Okay, when you depart the facility, how do you decide what  
25 route you're going to take?



1 A. We already have a route --

2 Q. Um-hum.

3 A. -- that we take. Well, each captain, some, they turn off at  
4 the Dairy Queen, some come off of on Glory Street and some go  
5 straight out, but then we come back a different way.

6 Q. Does he normally tell you or --

7 A. Right.

8 Q. -- you just know it because you've worked with a lot of them?

9 A. Well, he'll tell me. Most of them already know --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- because I've been with them a lot of times.

12 Q. Okay. Okay, everybody's phone is going off. Typically, how  
13 long does the land portion take prior to you --

14 A. The land portion takes anywhere from 47 minutes to 57  
15 minutes.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. That's the land tour.

18 Q. Okay. When you arrive at the ramp prior to the captain  
19 taking over --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- in your words, how that process works.

22 A. How the process --

23 Q. Yeah, the transfer.

24 A. All right. Once we arrive, this right here, the captain  
25 would get up and say -- and tell of all the safety rules, how to

1 put on the life vests and he'll joke around, you know, just a  
2 little, you know, to try to make people laugh and stuff.

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. And then I would get up out of the seat and sometimes I sit  
5 right behind him. If there's an empty spot, I go all the way to  
6 the back and sit. And my job on the lake is watching just for  
7 boats.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. They always tell me to be sure that you watch because he's  
10 sitting up in the chair, he's facing this way and I mean, his back  
11 is to -- that he can't see. So I'm looking all the time, I'm his  
12 eyes. Sometimes, you know, he'll turn around, too, and look but  
13 most of the time I'm watching out for him.

14 Q. Okay. When you're driving, do you ever use the radio?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. And what are some of the things that you might use a  
17 radio for?

18 A. Oh, you know, something else. Let me go back --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- to before he goes in the lake, this is important. We call  
21 the showboat to make sure it's clear because if you look at the  
22 ramp, there's woods back there and you can't see if anything is  
23 out, so we call in to make sure it's clear, to the Coast Guard on  
24 the radio, what (indiscernible). So we make sure that it's clear.

25 Q. Um-hum.

1 A. That's one other thing. All I do, I call in of an emergency,  
2 something happened to the duck somewhere else, on a road or I call  
3 in, I'm on my way home. I tell them where I'm at. Then if I'm  
4 the last duck off the lake, I call in, if I'm the last duck off  
5 tonight, I'm coming home, everything's okay.

6 Q. So do you normally call every time that -- every time  
7 previously or prior to getting back to the pier? So you did the  
8 land portion and you did the water portion, now you're on the land  
9 portion. Every time you call the office to let them know that --

10 A. Right, right, right.

11 Q. And what's the reason for that?

12 A. Photography. They have a kit of all the pictures, so they  
13 want to know which one is coming in.

14 Q. Okay, okay.

15 A. And it's for them, too, at the office, so they know what  
16 time, you know, they can send out the next crew, a trip to go out.

17 Q. Okay. So when you began, you said you started out as a  
18 driver.

19 A. Right.

20 Q. Could you explain to me some of the training that you had --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- or how long it took?

23 A. It took me a hundred hours.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. And they trained us on the road, they trained us on the lake.

1 If the captain would have a heart attack or something, what to do.  
2 If there's an emergency, if somebody would fall overboard, what to  
3 do. And they just drilled and drilled us. And Scott was mine and  
4 Scott, he made me -- I mean, you had to go by the rules with all  
5 of those but with him, especially, he had you go a hundred  
6 percent.

7 Q. Do you know Scott's last name?

8 A. I don't.

9 Q. Okay. Well, we'll have to try to find out what's Scott's  
10 last name.

11 A. I do not know --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. -- Scott's last name, I'm sorry, but he made --

14 Q. Does he still work for Branson Ducks?

15 A. Yeah, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. He's a CDL driver?

17 A. He's a CDL driver, too, and a captain.

18 Q. Oh, and a captain as well.

19 A. He went down, you know --

20 Q. Okay, okay, okay. Okay, he was -- okay, he was Duck 7.  
21 Okay, okay.

22 A. Yeah, and a trainer. Yeah, he trained us.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. Just like one time I was sitting -- one time I stopped at the  
25 light and it turned on me red. So, you know, you can make a right

1 on red. Well, I just slowed down and turned right. Well, he got  
2 mad and he said Gerry, you know you stop. I don't care what, you  
3 stop, then you turn. I mean, he was that way.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. You had to go by the rules.

6 Q. Okay. Any other training that you take part in, in the  
7 company?

8 A. Well, every year he trains us again. We go back over  
9 everything, all that we learned of in the hundred hours, we go  
10 back to everything. We go out for, I don't know, a half a day or  
11 something and we go through all the rules, all the training, where  
12 everything's on the duck and like, they don't want you -- if an  
13 emergency would come, they will teach to be able for us to do it  
14 right then, you don't have to think about it, then do it, you need  
15 to go ahead and do it.

16 Q. Um-hum. Would you be able to drive a duck if something  
17 happened to the captain?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Yes?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And you'd be comfortable because of the training?

22 A. I'm trained, yes, I'm trained --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. -- you know, how to get out of the water and to call in. And  
25 you know, sometimes you need to call 911 at first and sometimes

1 you call the office and then they can get a hold of 911.

2 Q. And how do you call the office?

3 A. Up on a two-way radio.

4 Q. Two-way radio?

5 A. A two-way radio.

6 Q. Can you kind of explain the two-way radio to us? I know that  
7 it's a VHF.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Are you able to hear when you're on the road? Are you able  
10 to hear marine, the --

11 A. I can't, I can't.

12 Q. -- ducks talking?

13 A. I cannot hear anybody. But when they put it on just marine,  
14 I can hear everybody.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. And then what we do is we -- all I know is if you mash the  
17 button one time and you're hooked up with the office and you hit  
18 the bottom button three times and you would (indiscernible)  
19 marina.

20 Q. Okay. When you hit the button and you're just -- the  
21 marine's gone and now it's just the office, you could hear the  
22 office calling you and --

23 A. Okay, they got phones that they can call through --

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. -- and they'll ring you. If something's happening like, say,

1 for instance, a storm is coming right then, they can call us up.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. And they'll ring, like a phone.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. They got a little line for that, but --

6 Q. So at any time the office tries to contact you, it rings like  
7 a phone?

8 A. Almost like a phone.

9 Q. Almost like a phone.

10 A. It's got a --

11 Q. It's got some kind of --

12 A. Yeah, some kind of --

13 Q. -- alarm or --

14 A. Yeah, alarm. A special, yeah, alarm that -- I mean, you know  
15 it's them calling you from the office.

16 Q. Okay. You explained, at the end of the day, you -- do you do  
17 any type of check on the --

18 A. Yes, we take the duck and late, especially, I check it again.

19 Q. Um-hum.

20 A. If anything is wrong, I'll -- I walk around it and look to  
21 see if all the lights still work and anything, oh, if they can fix  
22 it that night.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. (Indiscernible). I look under it, I don't crawl under, I  
25 look at the boots to see if they're sealed, you know,

1 (indiscernible). I just walk around it and check it out.

2 Q. Um-hum. Now, when you're under way -- I'm kind of jumping  
3 around, I apologize.

4 A. Go ahead.

5 Q. When you're under way -- and I know you're the lookout for  
6 the captain.

7 A. Right.

8 Q. Do certain captains have you do certain duties for them, like  
9 help them out with certain things?

10 A. One of them does, just a little bit.

11 Q. Um-hum.

12 A. Not much. I pass him -- if I'm sitting right behind him. If  
13 I'm sitting in the back, which that's where I kind of sit at most  
14 of the time, I can see better back there.

15 Q. Um-hum. And you said that the captain will give the talk,  
16 the safety speech --

17 A. Right.

18 Q. -- and point out the PFDs or the life preservers.

19 A. Right, he gets them out.

20 Q. Where's the one that he demonstrates, that he uses for his  
21 demonstration?

22 A. He keeps it in the front seat.

23 Q. He keeps it in the front seat?

24 A. He keeps it in the front seat, one, just like the one on top.

25 Q. Now, if you needed a life jacket, where is your life jacket



1 located?

2 A. Mine is over at the front seat. There's the captain's and  
3 mine is right there. It's one of those -- not the foam, you know,  
4 like everybody else. A soft-looking one. It's different from the  
5 other ones. Ours.

6 Q. Okay. In your time with the company, have you ever had to  
7 put a life jacket on?

8 A. I have not.

9 Q. No.

10 A. I have not ever been in that situation.

11 Q. Okay. So let's just -- let's fast -- or backtrack or fast  
12 forward. We'll go to your last, last tour of the day --

13 A. Okay.

14 Q. -- on the day of the accident. Anything out of the ordinary  
15 on that --

16 A. No.

17 Q. No.

18 A. The water was calm and the sun was shining. I mean, it  
19 looked, it looked good then. Once we got on the water and got  
20 around the island, you could see a front way, way off, I mean, as  
21 far as my eyes could see, I could see something and my weather  
22 station, I went on there and they didn't -- he didn't show that it  
23 was -- it looked like it was in the other side of the Ozarks.

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. On my phone, that's what it looked like.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. And I texted my wife. I got on the lake at 6:50.

3 Q. Six-fifty, okay.

4 A. Six-fifty. I got a text at -- and I always text her because  
5 I need a ride home and I told her I'd be home at the ducks up  
6 there at 7:25, but I texted her at 7:50 (sic), I always text her  
7 right before I go on the lake.

8 Q. Okay. Do you know what app you used for the weather, what  
9 it's called?

10 A. Weather -- let me see. The Weather Channel.

11 Q. The Weather Channel, okay.

12 A. I use, yeah, right here, The Weather Channel.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. Right there, The Weather Channel station.

15 Q. Do you normally check that prior to going out?

16 A. If I see a storm or something, I do.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. I always check it. And it'll show you, but that day -- and  
19 the lightning, we do not go out in the lightning 20 miles, any  
20 lightning around us 20 miles and under, we do not go out.

21 Q. Okay. When you departed for your trip, you said sometimes  
22 you have to wait 45 minutes to an hour. How long did you have to  
23 wait before you left at -- I believe it was --

24 A. Six o'clock, I believe we left.

25 Q. But I mean, how long did you have to wait prior to leaving,

1 were you kind of sitting around for a while or --

2 A. I think about -- I fell down and hurt myself right here and I  
3 was trying to get it fixed, I was bleeding bad and everything and  
4 -- and probably about a half an hour.

5 Q. Okay. So you weren't in the lounge at that time with the  
6 captain, Captain Scott?

7 A. No.

8 Q. No, okay.

9 A. No, I was --

10 Q. You're getting patched up at the time?

11 A. Yeah, I'm trying to get all fixed up to try to be able so I  
12 could go out on the next trip.

13 Q. Okay. Once you were on the water, and you said you were  
14 going -- the route, what's the normal route that you take on the  
15 water?

16 A. Okay, we come in right here and we go up around the island.

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. And then we come in this other ramp, on the north side of the  
19 ramp.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. The southbound (ph.) ramp.

22 Q. Other than seeing the weather far off in the distance --

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. -- did you see any lightning that day?

25 A. No.

1 Q. No, okay. Did the weather change at all during your trip?

2 A. Yes. Yes. I'll show you.

3 Q. You have a video of it?

4 A. I got a picture of it.

5 Q. Oh, that's great.

6 A. I'll show it to you. You all will have to -- all the --  
7 okay, I got on there -- you know, we got up there early and able,  
8 I got them on the lake at 6:50.

9 Q. Um-hum.

10 A. And this was taken at seven o'clock.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. And this was taken just at 7:01 and you look at the waves,  
13 how much more it is in a minute and I'm that far from -- that's  
14 the shore.

15 Q. Um-hum.

16 A. I mean, the sun was shining when I first went on, it was  
17 clear.

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. I couldn't see that.

20 Q. Okay. For the record, I'm just looking at a couple of photos  
21 on the cell phone. I'm actually going to ask you if you could  
22 send those to me, those are pretty nice pictures.

23 A. Okay.

24 Q. Okay. Okay, so once you departed the water, anything out of  
25 the ordinary on your way back to, to the base?

1 A. Oh, yes, we went up the hill and the wind just picked up so  
2 fast and blowing and so we sat there 10 minutes, 15 minutes, and  
3 we thought it was okay, so we started out and started across the  
4 dam, but Jesse said no, let's stop over here (indiscernible). So  
5 we sat there for I don't know how long, 30 minutes, 20 minutes, I  
6 don't know, but we sat there and it was waves, four-, five-foot  
7 waves it looked like and it was bad.

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. And the wind was blowing.

10 Q. By chance, did you text your wife saying that you were going  
11 to be late? No, I'm just curious because we would have a time  
12 stamp.

13 A. No, I didn't.

14 Q. So you had her waiting at the office?

15 A. Yeah. Let me see if I can find it. I might have. I don't  
16 know, I never thought about that. Where she was trying to leave  
17 and she couldn't leave because the wind was blowing so hard.

18 Q. Um-hum.

19 A. Maybe that. See, the wind is really high with rain, where  
20 she was telling me at home.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. And I told her not to leave. And we had stopped, too.

23 Q. Okay, but do you have the time on that?

24 A. But there's not a time on there.

25 Q. Okay, no problem. Okay, just to make sure you wanted to

1 notify her. Okay, just getting back to weather.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. Do you live here year round?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Is this typical weather for this time of year?

6 A. I've been here eight years and I'm not used to -- of any  
7 lakes where I'm from or anything --

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. -- up the flat country (indiscernible). This is the first  
10 time I've ever seen it and I've talked to people that have been  
11 here 25, 30 years and one guy lives just right over here  
12 (indiscernible) and he said Gerry, it did come up fast. I was in  
13 my yard and the sun was shining and all of a sudden, here it was.

14 Q. Um-hum. It lasted roughly, in your estimation, how long?

15 A. About a half an hour at least, a good half hour.

16 Q. Okay. Okay, training-wise, what do you do, as the driver, if  
17 you come into high winds?

18 A. Well, I've never did this, but I was trained it's the  
19 captain, he's supposed to tell me what to do.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. He's on the lake.

22 Q. Um-hum.

23 A. He's in charge.

24 Q. But how about when you're driving on the land shore?

25 A. Well, he's --

1 Q. He's still in charge?

2 A. I'm in charge a little bit, but he is still -- you know,  
3 they'll help you out --

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. -- if you need help.

6 Q. So he made the call of let's pull over and wait?

7 A. Right.

8 Q. Very good.

9 A. Yeah, he made that call. And I'm glad.

10 Q. You mentioned that you did some training every -- annual  
11 training --

12 A. Right.

13 Q. -- when you came back.

14 A. Right, every year, that's right.

15 Q. Okay, that's documented, correct?

16 A. Right.

17 Q. Okay, do you have to sign anything when that's done?

18 A. I think that the captain, he fills out some forms for you.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. And he turns it in and they have it up there.

21 Q. Um-hum.

22 A. I'm pretty sure.

23 Q. In your time with the company did you ever -- did you ever do  
24 any exercises with the Coast Guard?

25 A. I never did.

1 Q. You never did?

2 A. I never did exercises.

3 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with the operations manual with the  
4 company? Have you ever seen the operations manual?

5 A. Yes, the one that we get for us, you know, for drivers.

6 Q. Do you have a copy? Does it look like this?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yes, that's what it looks like. Yes, it is.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. I mean, I got that all there.

12 Q. Okay, but I just -- have you seen it?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. I have read it.

16 Q. You have read it, okay.

17 A. I went over it because when we have a class, we have to go  
18 over all of that. See, they go over that with us in class.

19 Q. Um-hum. How often do you have the classes, then?

20 A. Well, when I first started, we had that class and then they  
21 told us every year before we start, to read it.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. And then he'll take this out and ask us things --

24 Q. Um-hum.

25 A. -- out of the book.



1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Like a pop quiz or something.

3 Q. The day of the accident, do you recall, when you were on the  
4 water, seeing any -- since you were lookout --

5 A. Uh-huh.

6 Q. -- any other ducks on the water at the same time?

7 A. Um-hum. There was two more.

8 Q. Two more. And you saw them on the water?

9 A. Four and seven.

10 Q. Okay. Could you tell me, in relation to where you were,  
11 where they were? Was one ahead and one behind, to your port, to  
12 your starboard?

13 A. Scott was right behind me about five minutes and he went up  
14 to the island and that's the last time I saw him. And Kennedy  
15 (ph.), he was broke down, so he come in next and when he hit, he  
16 knew something was wrong, what I heard, and so he just turned  
17 right there and went around the showboat.

18 Q. That was Captain -- yeah.

19 A. That was Captain Kennedy.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I mean, he didn't even try to go up to the island.

22 Q. Okay, who was -- I'm sorry, the first boat you saw was who?

23 A. Was Scott.

24 Q. Oh, which is --

25 A. Seven.

1 Q. Seven, okay.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. So you saw seven and --

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. On the water you saw seven and you saw 17?

6 A. Yes. When I was -- see, I went around the island --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- because it was clear.

9 Q. Uh-huh.

10 A. And when we was heading in, that's when the wind started  
11 through all the pictures.

12 Q. Um-hum.

13 A. I probably got out of the lake about 7:04 and this picture's  
14 7:01 --

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. -- and 7:03, someone in there, that's when we went out of the  
17 lake.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. It took a minute or two before I took that out.

20 Q. Okay, just -- let me just -- now, I'm writing things too  
21 much, but the picture that was 18:41 -- oh, no, you went in the  
22 water at 18:50 and you departed the water at 19:03, so -- because  
23 your cell phone had -- when you sent your wife --

24 A. Right.

25 Q. -- that you're going in the water.

1 A. Yeah.

2 MR. VOLPE: Okay. Okay, Gerry, I'm going to pass you on.

3 MR. MAROTTI: Okay.

4 MR. VOLPE: Thank you.

5 MR. MAROTTI: Yes, sir.

6 BY SGT. [REDACTED]

7 Q. Thank you, Gerry, for coming in. I'm Sergeant [REDACTED] from  
8 the Highway Patrol.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. You said that you have worked with Captain Scott McKee in the  
11 past?

12 A. I have.

13 Q. How many trips do you think you've made with him?

14 A. I have done over 1500 trips; with Scott, about 300, because I  
15 used to get him all the time.

16 Q. So you've been with him -- you've been on a trip with him  
17 about 300 times --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- in the three seasons --

20 A. Right.

21 Q. -- you've been here?

22 A. At least (indiscernible).

23 Q. Okay. Have you ever had occasion to witness Captain Scott's  
24 actions in any situation that would be considered dangerous or  
25 abnormal?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. No.

4 Q. Whenever you have taken the water trips, are passengers, do  
5 they -- are they free to use a PFD at any time during that trip?

6 A. If they want to, they can.

7 Q. Okay. Are they told, are they ever instructed, whenever you  
8 guys do your briefings at the beginning --

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 Q. -- or right before you get into the water, are they  
11 instructed that they're free to use those at any time?

12 A. Instructed. Sometimes some of the captains will. If you  
13 think -- if there's any time you think that you need it, you put  
14 it on.

15 Q. And who says --

16 A. I heard them say that. I don't know which captains, but --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- some of them say anytime you think you need it, you put it  
19 on. But if you see me and the captain put one on, you got to put  
20 one on. That's how it is.

21 Q. Okay. And how are the drivers paid, are you paid by trip or  
22 by the hour or how are you paid?

23 A. I'm paid by the hour.

24 Q. You're paid by the hour?

25 A. I'm paid by the hour.

1 SGT. [REDACTED] And that's all the questions I have, sir.

2 BY MR. [REDACTED]

3 Q. Thank you, again, sir, for coming in. Again, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with  
4 the U.S. Coast Guard out of St. Louis here. Just a few questions  
5 I have for you. Are you familiar with any of the onboard marine  
6 systems that are in place on any of the ducks?

7 A. Like?

8 Q. Like, you know, firefighting, life saving, dewatering.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Could you --

11 A. Do you mean like fire stickers and --

12 Q. Yes, sir, warning related, yes. So firefighting systems that  
13 are on board.

14 A. Right. I'm trained for that, too.

15 Q. Yes, sir. So are you aware of dewatering capabilities? Do  
16 you know of any dewatering?

17 A. I don't.

18 Q. Okay. In the event that a vessel was flooding, there are  
19 installed systems that would help dewater the vessel and pump it  
20 over the side.

21 A. Right.

22 Q. Are you familiar with any of those?

23 A. I'm familiar with that.

24 Q. Okay. Can you tell me --

25 A. All right.

1 Q. -- what some of those systems might be? Just out of  
2 curiosity.

3 A. This is (indiscernible).

4 Q. That's okay.

5 A. There is --

6 Q. And I understand you (indiscernible).

7 A. -- a bilge pump, there is a bilge pump, and they got three  
8 pails on there and a hand-pump in the back.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Where you have to have a hand-pump and three buckets.

11 Q. Three buckets, okay.

12 A. Three buckets. And we have to inspect and see if it's in  
13 there every day.

14 Q. Any other dewatering --

15 A. And a pump that's automatic, if it starts to filling up,  
16 taking this pump --

17 Q. Yes, sir.

18 A. -- and they'll pump it out and then we got to a lever that  
19 you can mash down and it'll come out. Then we got some systems on  
20 the side lights and if it starts getting any water in there, it'll  
21 buzz us.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. They'll let you know that -- of it filling up with water.

24 Q. Do you conduct these pre-inspections with the captain? You  
25 guys are hand-in-hand doing this?

1 A. Right, we're hand-in-hand.

2 Q. Okay. And he's -- what is he covering and what are you  
3 covering?

4 A. Well, I cover everything he covers.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. I just do the whole thing so that we make sure.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. That's the way I do it.

9 Q. So the whole checklist is just doing (indiscernible)?

10 A. I do everything, his part and my part and he does mine and,  
11 you know, we just check each other's out --

12 Q. Yes, sir.

13 A. -- just to make sure.

14 Q. When you're on the water, and obviously, the captain's in  
15 charge of the duck, do you have any onboard emergency  
16 responsibilities?

17 A. Well, I try to help somebody out. CPR, I've got -- I took  
18 that. You know, if I need to give that --

19 Q. Yes, sir.

20 A. -- I can. And we got a first-aid kit and sometimes I help  
21 out, you know, if we get too hot sometimes with people and --

22 Q. So I'll elaborate a little bit. So in the event like, say,  
23 for example, someone may have fallen overboard, do you have  
24 specific duties?

25 A. I do.

1 Q. Okay. In that scenario, what would be some of your duties to  
2 do?

3 A. My duty is to get the ring up there in front, pull it down,  
4 just a snap and get the hook and the rope, I mean, it's on the --  
5 from the buoy of the ring and I give it to the captain.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And I'm qualified for that, too. If, you know, he thinks I  
8 need to go to do it right fast, I go do it or just whatever. If  
9 I'm in the back of the boat and somebody falls in, I'm right  
10 there, which I have one back there, too, in the back.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. I throw that to them. But he's always there to help me out,  
13 the captain.

14 Q. Okay, so to help the captain out, is that --

15 A. Right.

16 Q. Is that what you just said?

17 A. Well, he's always there to help me out.

18 Q. Oh, okay.

19 A. But I'm trained for it, too.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. But I listen to him.

22 Q. Listen to the captain?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Okay, you take directions.

25 A. I listen to the captain.



1 Q. Do you have any authorities on the vessel, say, to tell  
2 passengers to put life jackets on in an emergency or does that  
3 come from --

4 A. That comes from him.

5 Q. It comes from the captain only?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It comes from the captain.

9 Q. Okay. And just to clarify regarding drills. So you're doing  
10 drills periodically throughout the season? I'm sorry, do you do  
11 drills throughout the season?

12 A. No, we do it where we go through a training at first of a  
13 hundred hours.

14 Q. Every season?

15 A. No, just --

16 Q. Initially?

17 A. -- on the hind, on the hind and every year we go through a  
18 training about a duck. We go out on the lake, we get on the road  
19 and drive and I mean, you know, like we got to know everything in  
20 that book.

21 Q. Yes, sir.

22 A. Because they tell us just to read it before we come up there.  
23 So he'll ask us things on it, like a pop quiz I guess you'd call  
24 it, but he'll ask you things and they always talk to us about  
25 safety. You know, what to do. I mean, they always, the captains,

1 especially Scott, he always is telling you what to do --

2 Q. Okay.

3 A. -- all through the year.

4 Q. Okay, is there any other training sessions that occur besides  
5 the one in the beginning of the year?

6 A. We have a meeting every -- once a month and we go through a  
7 lot of it, of the training.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. Yeah, once a month with some of the older guys. He'll maybe  
10 tell us all different kinds of safety stuff, remind us.

11 Q. Okay. And now is that land specific, water specific, or  
12 both?

13 A. Water and land.

14 Q. Water and land?

15 A. Water and land.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. We go through -- that's once a month we have that.

18 Q. Okay. And then drills, do you ever do drills on the water  
19 with the captains, during the season, outside of that one that you  
20 immediately --

21 A. No, that's it.

22 Q. No drills on the water?

23 A. No more drills on the water.

24 MR. [REDACTED] I believe that's all the questions.

25 MR. MAROTTI: Okay.

1 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you, sir.

2 BY MR. VOLPE:

3 Q. I just really have a follow-up question on -- that he just  
4 brought up, the meeting you said you have once a month.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Do you have to sign that you're at the meeting?

7 A. We have to sign.

8 Q. Okay. And generally, does the same person do the training or  
9 a different person?

10 A. No, there's different.

11 Q. Okay. Were you there July 13th?

12 A. Yes, I was.

13 Q. Do you remember who did the training?

14 A. Let's see, Matt talked to us and Curtis, I think, with Jed.

15 Q. Jed?

16 Q. Jed. I believe he talked a little bit about something, he  
17 talked about --

18 Q. And Jed, that's Johnny Davidson, right?

19 A. The older guy, he's been there a long time. Jed.

20 (Crosstalk.)

21 MR. MAROTTI: That's the only way I know them, you know, by  
22 their first name or the captain's name, but that's the only way I  
23 know them.

24 BY MR. VOLPE:

25 Q. Or nicknames?

1 A. Yeah, their nickname. Or Korn, it might've been Korn. Now  
2 Korn, he teaches us the Coast Guard stuff. You know, he's  
3 something -- you know, we used to be able to go up to St. Louis  
4 for training. Now, he did something, I don't know. Korn.

5 Q. Could you spell it?

6 A. K-o-r-n.

7 Q. That's just another nickname?

8 A. Yeah, that's his nickname.

9 (Crosstalk.)

10 MR. MAROTTI: But anyways, he said -- yeah.

11 BY MR. VOLPE:

12 Q. Who is he?

13 A. Instructor.

14 Q. Is he a captain, as well?

15 A. Yeah, he's a captain, but he's retired, but he still does the  
16 instruction. No, no, he's been working just a little bit this  
17 summer.

18 MR. VOLPE: Okay, I have no further questions.

19 MR. MAROTTI: Okay.

20 SGT. [REDACTED] No, sir, I don't. Those were the only  
21 questions I had.

22 MR. VOLPE: [REDACTED]

23 MR. [REDACTED] No, sir, thank you.

24 MR. MAROTTI: Okay.

25 BY MR. VOLPE:

1 Q. Is there anything that you'd like to add that might assist us  
2 with this investigation, that you could think of?

3 A. I can't, no. That's about it.

4 Q. That's about it?

5 A. I can't think of anything else.

6 MR. VOLPE: Well, I'd like to thank you again for coming in  
7 and talking to us this morning, or actually this afternoon.

8 MR. MAROTTI: Yeah, okay.

9 MR. VOLPE: And we'll go off the record at 15:10 on  
10 July 23rd.

11 (Whereupon, at 3:10 p.m., the interview was concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


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

ACCIDENT NO.:               DCA18MM028

PLACE:

DATE:                        July 23, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been compared to  
the recording accomplished at the hearing.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
David Martini  
Transcriber