

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FIRE ABOARD THE *SPIRIT OF BOSTON*
NEAR THE BOSTON SPORTS DISTRICT
IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS ON
MARCH 24, 2023

* Accident No.: DCA23FM022

* * * * *

Interview of: JAYDIN DeARCO, Senior Deckhand
Spirit of Boston, City Cruises

Boston, Massachusetts

Wednesday
April 5, 2023

APPEARANCES:

██████████ ██████████ Lieutenant Commander
First District Formal Investigation Team
United States Coast Guard

BRIAN YOUNG, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

KEITH FAWCETT, Marine Accident Investigator
First District Formal Investigation Team
United States Coast Guard

██████████ ██████████ Lieutenant
First District Formal Investigation Team
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██████████ ██████████ Lieutenant Commander, Legal Advisor
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ERIC DENLEY, Counsel
City Cruises

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I N T E R V I E W

(3:13 p.m.)

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3 LCDR ██████ This is a joint U.S. Coast Guard/NTSB
4 investigation, and the Coast Guard is the lead agency. We're
5 conducting this interview under Coast Guard regulations. The date
6 is April 5th, 2023. The time is 3:13 p.m. We're conducting this
7 interview with Mr. Jaydin DeArco, and the location is the First
8 Coast Guard District conference room. So we're conducting this
9 interview to examine the events surrounding the fire on board the
10 excursion vessel, Spirit of Boston, that occurred on March 24th,
11 2023, in the Boston Harbor.

12 We're going to go around the room and introduce ourselves and
13 then we'll go to you to introduce yourself. And then if everyone
14 could just spell their last name for the record as well. So I'll
15 go ahead and start. My name is Lt. Commander ██████ ██████ ██████
16 ██████ and I'm with the First Coast Guard District formal
17 investigation team.

18 MR. YOUNG: Good afternoon. My name is Brian Young. I'm an
19 investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, NTSB,
20 and my name is spelled Y-o-u-n-g. Thank you for being here today.

21 MR. FAWCETT: Hi. My name is Keith Fawcett. I'm a civilian
22 marine accident investigator with the U.S. Coast Guard. My last
23 name is spelled F-a-w-c-e-t-t.

24 LCDR ██████ I'm Lt. Commander ██████ ██████ I'm the
25 legal advisor to the investigation, and it's ██████

1 LT [REDACTED] And I'm Lt. [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and I am
2 with the District One investigations team.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] And we have Commander [REDACTED] on the line.

4 CMDR [REDACTED] Yes, I'm here, Commander. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the
5 lead investigator, [REDACTED].

6 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. And, Mr. DeArco, if you can go ahead and
7 introduce yourself, and spell your last name as well.

8 MR. DEARCO: My name is Jaydin DeArco. I was the senior
9 deckhand; I was on duty that night in the Spirit of Boston. The
10 last name is spelled D-e-a-r-c-o.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] And do you have counsel representing you today?

12 MR. DEARCO: I do, yes.

13 MR. DENLEY: I'm Eric Denley, D-e-n-l-e-y. I'm counsel for
14 City Cruises.

15 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay. Mr. DeArco, if at any time you need to
16 change or modify what you've said or even after this interview you
17 come back and remember something, just go through your counsel, we
18 can have that corrected in the record. You may also appeal the
19 final results of any reported investigation that may result from
20 this investigation. And just for your information, just on the
21 Coast Guard Marine casualty investigation process, you can Google
22 the Coast Guard Marine Safety Manual Volume 5, and that will kind
23 of go through our formal investigation process. Do you have any
24 questions before we begin?

25 MR. DEARCO: No.

1 LCDR ██████ Okay. I'll turn it over to Lt. ██████

2 INTERVIEW OF JAYDIN DEARCO

3 BY LT ██████

4 Q. Thank you again for being with us. So first we'd like to
5 start to talk about your role as a deckhand aboard the Spirit of
6 Boston and then we'll talk more about the occurrence of March
7 24th, 2023. So what is your -- you stated that you were the
8 senior deckhand on board the Spirit of Boston. What is -- what
9 does that role entail?

10 A. So a senior deckhand is someone that has more seniority over
11 -- most of the hired deckhands and those who are more junior. So
12 it's more so by seniority, and senior deckhands are granted more
13 of a measure of authority over junior deckhands. That involves
14 (indiscernible) duties and delegating tasks as necessary, and
15 just, of course, acting at the discretion of the captain for any
16 reason he would assign.

17 Specifically as far as duties, involves pre-cruise, during
18 the cruise and post-cruise. It's (indiscernible) responsible for
19 things related to the exterior. While we're underway, I'm more
20 concerned on the safety of the vessel itself, ensuring the
21 passengers' safety and their activities. We do regular security
22 rounds of all decks while we're underway.

23 Pre-cruise (indiscernible) consists of cleaning and
24 maintaining the outer decks, ensuring that the restrooms have been
25 stocked and those are clean. We do run drills on occasion for

1 some cruises as well, and of course while we're on underway, we do
2 regular rounds of the engine space, the bow thruster that's
3 operational at the time. They check that as well. And just
4 ensure that all the guests are acting in a safe manner.

5 Q. And how long have you been employed by Hornblower City
6 Cruises?

7 A. So I joined the company in July of 2021 -- or no, that's
8 correct -- that's 2021. I was 18 when I graduated high school, so
9 I signed --

10 Q. And what position did you join?

11 A. So I was a deckhand.

12 Q. And is the term senior deckhand, is that a designated
13 position?

14 A. So it's --

15 MR. DENLEY: Object -- could you --

16 LT [REDACTED] Okay.

17 MR. DENLEY: -- clarify what --

18 LT [REDACTED] Of course.

19 MR. DENLEY: What does mean designated position?

20 BY LT [REDACTED]

21 Q. In writing. So is there a -- as part of the organizational
22 chart for the vessel, is there a position that is considered a
23 senior deckhand, or have you been designated in writing? Have you
24 been identified by the crew or captain as being a senior deckhand?

25 (Crosstalk)

1 Q. -- from a regular deckhand?

2 MR. DENLEY: I'll say a couple of things there. Has the
3 captain -- does the captain recognize him as a senior deckhand?

4 LT [REDACTED] Yes.

5 MR. FAWCETT: You're asking as like a formal change in
6 position from deckhand to senior deckhand?

7 LT [REDACTED] Yes.

8 BY LT [REDACTED]

9 Q. Is there a formal change --

10 A. Yes, there is a change in position, there's an increase in
11 pay as well.

12 Q. And with the crew compliment of a cruise, is there always a
13 senior -- in your experience, has there always been a senior
14 deckhand on board?

15 A. No.

16 Q. On the night of the 24th, what was the crew's makeup?

17 A. In terms of how many crew members were on board?

18 Q. Yes, sir.

19 A. So the crew on board, there was a captain and there was a
20 second captain and a trainee as well. So for the crew, there was
21 a dedicated first mate, (indiscernible) myself, another crew
22 member and -- there's 3 -- so that's about six --

23 Q. Okay. And what is the chain of command within that crew,
24 starting from the captain as we move down.

25 A. So from there -- it starts with the captain. He holds the

1 overall authority and responsibility for the vessel's safety and
2 navigation, its operation. Then (indiscernible) we do have a
3 captain who is training, who's training to be signed on to that
4 vessel. Then below that we have the first mate. Essentially
5 below that we have the senior deckhand. After senior deckhands,
6 we have the rest of the regular deckhands, if you will.

7 Q. And what are the added responsibilities that you say these
8 are added responsibilities of the senior deckhand --

9 A. Yes. So the added responsibilities will entail of acting as
10 a lead, coordinating and delegating duties as necessary as far as
11 tasks go on the cruise, and it's -- in some cases where there's
12 not a first mate that's on duty, the senior deckhand will then act
13 as the --

14 Q. And when did you become senior deckhand, roughly?

15 A. Roughly would have been the summer of 2022.

16 Q. And do you -- prior to being employed in July 2021 by going
17 aboard City Cruises, had you had any marine experience prior to
18 that?

19 A. No.

20 Q. So all the training that you have received was with the
21 company that you're currently with?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. And what types of training have you received?

24 A. Specifically trainings I received was in terms of fire, how
25 to properly extinguish a fire, man overboard procedures in case

1 there was some need for guests who fall overboard and how to
2 recover them. Things entailing abandon ship procedures, so we're
3 trained to how to handle that. (Indiscernible), kind of operate
4 all the fire systems and fire suppression systems. And then we
5 have the engine room spaces and -- general emergency, be it
6 (indiscernible) medical, be it involving guests or the vessel
7 itself. We're trained in the -- we're trained in those
8 procedures. And, of course, there's line handling when it comes
9 to tying up the vessel as we return to the dock. All those
10 (indiscernible) training.

11 Q. And who provides the training to you?

12 A. The person who provided that training was a captain with the
13 company, Captain Rob Schuler. He was the one who conducted my
14 initial orientation. The training, when it becomes more of
15 specific duties while we're on a cruise, it's -- the training's
16 usually handled by the captain or the first mate who's on duty
17 during that cruise.

18 Q. Are you responsible to provide any training?

19 A. In some cases I happened to be asked by the captain to
20 provide training for new members, new deckhands that were brought
21 on.

22 Q. Does any of those members, are they marine crew or does it
23 also include restaurant staff?

24 A. Strictly limited to the marine crew.

25 Q. Is the training you received, is it a -- you had mentioned an

1 orientation. Is that a formal -- by formal, I mean, a standard
2 PowerPoint presentation, or is it based upon your level and the
3 master's level and the knowledge people have? So is it a standard
4 training or is it a kind of -- changes from captain to captain,
5 that training?

6 A. So in terms of orientation --

7 MR. DENLEY: Can you speak to that; do you have knowledge
8 about that, or can you just speak to how you were trained?

9 BY LT [REDACTED]

10 A. Yes, so I cannot speak to whether or not that training is
11 standardized across the board for the entire company. But from
12 what I can tell you, training did consist of a number of
13 presentations -- PowerPoint presentation, as well as, of course, a
14 hands-on training where you go in, use those spaces, examine those
15 systems related to our job functions, and this is being
16 demonstrated for us. And we're instructed how to use that system,
17 how to handle a (indiscernible). So that's far as the training I
18 received.

19 Q. Great. And have you had any training since your orientation?

20 A. Since orientation, yes.

21 Q. What type of training?

22 A. So the training -- one of the things as far as just for
23 (indiscernible) done annually. That's for company-wide, for
24 everyone who's a part of the operation, just a general policy
25 (indiscernible). And occasionally, we also regularly go through

1 drills that consists of fire drills, (indiscernible), and how to
2 start up and shut down the vessel is also (indiscernible).

3 Q. Approximately how often would you say you conduct fire
4 drills?

5 A. I can't quite give an exact number, but I will say that not a
6 month working would go by because we're conducting those drills.

7 Q. And just so we have an overall knowledge of, I guess, your
8 work schedule, how often are you working aboard the Spirit of
9 Boston?

10 A. So I can't quite give an exact number.

11 Q. Approximately.

12 A. I'm just a part-time worker as far as scheduling is
13 concerned. As far as an approximation, I can't quite give an
14 exact number --

15 Q. Just every week, every month, twice a month? I mean --

16 A. Yes --

17 Q. -- just tagging the overall level of your involvement aboard
18 the vessel.

19 A. I would say at least --

20 Q. Once a month?

21 A. I would say at least every month it would vary. Yes, at
22 least once a month --

23 Q. And can you tell me about your -- these fire drills that you
24 conducted -- maybe the most recent fire drill and can you describe
25 to me how it's executed?

1 A. So the most recent fire drill that we conducted that I can
2 recall was when we tested the fire code system on the Spirit of
3 Boston on the stern deck. We laid out the hose and we did a drill
4 as if it were a fire that was on another vessel. And did a full
5 test of the pressure hose system, we tested for all the pumps that
6 we can, put pressure to the fire pump and did a full test of that,
7 and that was with the entire crew that was involved with that
8 effort at the time.

9 Q. Just to be clear, you (indiscernible) marine crew?

10 A. There's a crew (indiscernible). So that's the captain, the
11 first mate on the deck.

12 Q. Have you ever taken part in an exercise or drill in which the
13 restaurant staff was involved?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Do you take part in -- I believe it was called like a pre-
16 cruise training or, you know, prior to the cruise or post-cruises,
17 is there something where the captain holds a meeting pre-cruise
18 with the whole staff to include the marine crew and the restaurant
19 crew?

20 A. That particular night, we did hold a briefing, but that was
21 between the captain and the rest of the crew, but that was the
22 marine crew not including the restaurant staff.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. The restaurant staff held their own briefing. If there was a
25 larger briefing, I wasn't aware of it and I wasn't present. I was

1 just there for the briefing with the captain.

2 Q. What types of things did he --

3 (Crosstalk)

4 A. -- involved in the briefing, we always discuss the condition
5 on the cruise, what type of guests are getting on board, be it a
6 corporate group, a university group, a school group or another
7 event, things of that nature. We discuss things such as line
8 decisions, (indiscernible) lines on the bow, the stern, who was
9 going to be handling the (indiscernible) and discussing rounds --
10 safety rounds we were going to do that night. So anything that's
11 considered pertinent to the operation of the cruise that
12 particular night are things which we discuss.

13 Q. And specifically then on the 24th, what type of -- what was
14 your responsibility with regards to rounds? Do you remember what
15 your -- identified to you --

16 A. So what I can recall, in terms of responsibilities,
17 responsibilities would be pretty much identical across the board.

18 MR. DENLEY: Can you please -- I'm going to just put an
19 objection on the record for, you know, relevance for kind of all
20 of this stuff that happened while they're underway before the
21 cruise, just in general, -- the training incidents and those types
22 of things. But go ahead, answer the question.

23 BY LT [REDACTED]

24 A. I'm sorry, could you repeat the question?

25 Q. Yes, sir. So on the 24th of March, you stated that the

1 captain had a pre-underway briefing where he described, or he
2 identified round schedules and basic overall what you guys were
3 going to be doing that day. Can you tell me how you were affected
4 and what your round schedule was, was it different or what you did
5 for that cruise?

6 A. So in terms of round schedules, nothing was set in stone as
7 far as a hard-set guideline that, you know, for instance -- I can
8 remember one -- this is the spot for setting your time and this is
9 his spot. So as far as the rounds, those were all done by
10 individual discretion or as the captain or first mate might assign
11 as necessary given the condition at a certain time. So as far as
12 my duties that night, I did rounds as I would normally,
13 (indiscernible) vessel -- passenger decks, checking for any safety
14 concerns for any (indiscernible) pertaining to the vessel's safety
15 at the time.

16 And of course, other than that, just doing rounds of the
17 engine room, (indiscernible) spaces. Like usually what we
18 practice is that there will parts at time, for instance, every
19 half hour, every 15 or 45, someone will have to do the check
20 (indiscernible), and that did happen that night. We did have a
21 set schedule as far as the frequency of head room checks in
22 particular since they were --

23 Q. You had mentioned the rounds and the -- how often they were
24 completed. What was the schedule for that night? Every how many
25 minutes would do the round?

1 A. For the --

2 Q. For -- you said -- for the engine room.

3 A. For the engine room. For the engine room, I can't quite
4 recall exactly what that was, but I will say that the multiple
5 engine -- for certainty, there was multiple engine room checks
6 being done --

7 Q. Let me rephrase -- thank you for the answer to my question.
8 How often did you rotate? So are you set for a certain deck, stay
9 on, say, deck 1 and then every 30 minutes you would rotate to deck
10 2? How does that work?

11 A. No, there's a --

12 Q. Where did you -- on the night of the 24th -- where was your
13 primary position?

14 A. So I did not have set primary position. The only
15 (indiscernible) respond to the area of assignment when it came to
16 (indiscernible) matters as necessary. As soon as we do rounds,
17 anytime we would complete a round, we would turn back up to the
18 bridge and talk to the captain about any concerns that we saw
19 while we were on the rounds. And then we would then
20 (indiscernible) until it was time to do the next round.

21 Q. So I just want to make sure I'm clear and understanding this.
22 So you're continuously just moving about the deck and everybody
23 has their own kind of movement throughout?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. Okay. At any point on the night of the 24th, were you on

1 board the main deck, the deck where the galley is at there?

2 A. Yes. As part of the rounds I conducted, I walked through
3 deck 1 multiple times throughout the night.

4 Q. And you had mentioned earlier part of your firefighting
5 training is, like, knowing the fire prevention capabilities on the
6 Spirit of Boston. Are you familiar with the firefighters -- I'm
7 sorry -- fire extinguishers and fire blankets script? Are you
8 familiar with the ones that are on the first deck (indiscernible)?
9 I'm calling the first deck --

10 A. That's correct.

11 Q. And how many fire extinguishers are on -- do you know off
12 hand how many are in that first deck --

13 A. Off hand, I can't quite remember the number. I do know that
14 there are fire extinguishers that are --

15 Q. And also is there a fire blanket in that vicinity?

16 A. There is a fire blanket.

17 Q. Did you receive training on how to utilize the fire blanket?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And to the best of your knowledge and recollection, after all
20 of what you believe to be fire extinguishers and fire blankets in
21 place --

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. If -- so -- have you ever been part of a fire on board a
24 vessel?

25 A. Of an active fire on board a vessel, no. (Indiscernible)

1 fire on the vessel.

2 Q. Have you ever conducted a fire drill or exercise in the
3 galley area?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Can you --

6 (Crosstalk)

7 A. Particularly the drills, of course, there was a scenario
8 where there was a mock fire, so that's usually when my -- the
9 first mate's on duty with the captain. And (indiscernible) that
10 fire is if there was a grease fire on top of the stove. And so
11 that's what the captain demonstrated on how to properly operate
12 the fire blanket to extinguish the fire, and the CO2 suppressors
13 that are in the galley (indiscernible) and use of the fire
14 extinguisher and operating it to extinguish the fire.

15 Q. And in that drill, whose responsibility would it have been to
16 extinguish or to use the fire extinguishers as well as the fire
17 suppression system?

18 A. As far as the drill?

19 Q. Yes.

20 A. As far as the drill, the purpose of it to so that everyone
21 who is on the crew that night has some knowledge and has the
22 ability to operate said fire, and control and limit in the event
23 that actually was a fire situation on board. So (indiscernible)
24 for all of us to be sure that everyone who was present in the
25 drill has some knowledge of that operation.

1 Q. Was anybody from the galley staff present during that drill?

2 A. Not that I can recall, but if you're asking me whether or not
3 they were active participants in the drill --

4 Q. And with that specific drill, if it was a -- speaking to the
5 drill, whether if there was a grease fire located there, the
6 captain and the crew -- you guys discussed that -- the crew,
7 meaning marine crew, would be the primary responsible for --

8 MR. DENLEY: Objection, calls for speculation. Are you
9 asking what was discussed that --

10 LT [REDACTED] Yes.

11 MR. DENLEY: -- that night?

12 LT [REDACTED] Yes.

13 BY LT [REDACTED]

14 Q. No speculation. What was discussed that night? What would
15 be the expectation of the captain who instructed you to put that
16 fire out using the fire suppression system?

17 A. So going back, so as far as fire (indiscernible), you asked
18 if there was a fire drill that particular night.

19 Q. The fire drill that you had completed in the galley area.
20 You had stated that you did a -- it was a grease fire. And you
21 walked through the grease fire and how to utilize the fire
22 extinguishers, as well as the fire suppression system. And was
23 the extinguishing of the fire to be --

24 A. That's correct, yes.

25 Q. Okay. So back to the night of the 24th, can you walk me

1 through your, say, from when you were moored up until when you
2 departed the vessel, what your actions were?

3 A. So as the vessel (indiscernible), specifically I'm on the
4 stern deck, myself and other crew members would (indiscernible)
5 via stern. And once we're done with that, we went back up to the
6 boarding deck. The boarding deck out on deck 2, set the gangway,
7 and then we then let all the passengers to disembark, because the
8 captain told us that it was okay for us to do so.

9 So after then, all the guests disembark as (indiscernible)
10 operation, and then that's when most of the guests has disembarked
11 the vessel. Marine (indiscernible) crew's duties consisted of
12 cleaning all the bathrooms, ensuring that there's no trash or any
13 damage in them. During the rounds, we do the entirety of the
14 vessel, ensure that there's no guests remaining. Then afterwards
15 (indiscernible) is taking the shore power cable that's on the dock
16 and connecting that to the vessel. And then the captain
17 (indiscernible) proper procedure -- would be responsible for the
18 procedure to switch the vessel's power over from vessel-based
19 power to shore-based power before shutting down the engines and
20 generators.

21 Q. At what point -- what approximately was the engine --

22 A. From what I recall, it's anywhere between -- it was between
23 10:30 p.m. to 10:40 p.m.

24 Q. And do you normally -- or have you previous or even on the
25 night of the 24th, did you dispose of any trash? Did you take the

1 trash out --

2 A. After the cruise had (indiscernible) vessel reached the dock
3 that night?

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. No, I did not take out the trash.

6 Q. Did you take any trash -- did you bag any trash from the
7 service station on One Deck and bring it aft?

8 MR. DENLEY: So may I say correctly by saying out trash, you
9 don't mean taking trash off the vessel to the landing base?

10 LT [REDACTED] That was my initial question and then he stated
11 that he did not.

12 MR. DENLEY: That's correct. So as far as emptying trash
13 bins on board the vessel?

14 LT [REDACTED] That's my second question, yes.

15 BY LT [REDACTED]

16 A. Then yes, yes, I did it that night.

17 Q. Did you do it for the first deck?

18 A. I don't quite recall.

19 Q. Do you recall where you took it from?

20 A. That night, I do believe, if I remember correctly, I took out
21 the trash from the Deck 2 wait station, as well as the Deck 3 wait
22 station.

23 Q. Okay. And where did you take that trash to then?

24 A. So that trash goes in the trash bins around the stern deck on
25 Deck 1.

1 Q. And in your -- the course of your night in your rounds, did
2 you notice any unsupervised lit sternos or any lit candles in any
3 area in which you would normally not see that?

4 A. No, I did not notice anything of that nature.

5 Q. Did you spend any time in the One Deck service area?

6 A. Spend time in the Deck 1 --

7 Q. Deck 1 wait station -- I got it right there -- wait station?
8 Did you spend any time in that area?

9 A. During the -- while the cruise is still ongoing, yes.

10 Q. And what was -- what were you doing --

11 A. I was making a cup of tea.

12 Q. Okay. And how -- can you tell me how you make that tea?

13 A. So essentially what you do is you (indiscernible) in the wait
14 station, pour the -- put the cap on the spout, put some water in,
15 put the teabag in, put exactly three packs of sugar, stirred it,
16 and then I walked out and did the rest of my rounds.

17 Q. And now that water, how is that water heated?

18 A. The heated water is electrically heated.

19 Q. So it's a water heater that plugs --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Was there a coffee pot there as well, do you recall?

22 A. Yes, there was a coffee pot as well.

23 Q. And how is that heated?

24 A. It was electrically heated as well.

25 Q. Is there a -- was there a coffee pot that being heated by a

1 sterno? Do you remember?

2 A. I don't recall.

3 LT [REDACTED] That's all the questions I have.

4 LCDR [REDACTED] Mr. Fawcett.

5 BY MR. FAWCETT:

6 Q. So I want to follow up a little. So the senior deckhand
7 position, to become a senior deckhand, do you have to perform some
8 tasks? And by that, I mean, do you have to draw out diagrams of
9 vessel piping or produce, like, a bunch of stuff and then someone
10 looks at it and says, okay, you have better knowledge of the
11 vessel than a deckhand. And then you get certified as a senior
12 deckhand?

13 A. So to answer the first question whether or not you have the
14 draw the diagrams or schematics of the vessel's piping, no.
15 That's not really one of the stipulations to become a senior
16 deckhand.

17 Q. What are the stipulations?

18 A. So as far as assigning a senior deckhand, (indiscernible) by
19 the captain -- by one of the captains when I was about to be in
20 her cruise. And so one of the signifiers of a senior deckhand is
21 you're given a set of tablets.

22 Q. Is there any kind of documentation that takes place that --
23 and Mr. [REDACTED] talked about designated in writing that you're a
24 senior deckhand?

25 A. So as far as (indiscernible), yes, senior deckhands are

1 required to have a more advanced knowledge of the vessel and
2 that's all provided or trained by both the captains on duty. As
3 far as any signed documentation, that documentation will be
4 (indiscernible) receive and signed for by the company.

5 Q. So on the accident date, you made rounds of the first deck.
6 During that time, did you see any celebrations, birthday parties,
7 wedding anniversaries where they might have used candles? So each
8 table has a table candle. Did you see any, like, celebration like
9 that with birthday candles or anything like that?

10 A. No.

11 Q. You mentioned, I think, dedicated first mate. So there were
12 two captains on there, one was in training, and then there was a
13 first mate. Do you know if those first mates have to go through
14 some type of training program to become first mates?

15 A. So from what I recall (indiscernible) that first mate the
16 exact training procedure that first mate went through. I'm
17 unaware specifically of what type of training program that that
18 person went through in particular.

19 Q. Are you involved in training to become a first mate?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And what are you doing to become a first mate?

22 A. So from the instructions that I received --

23 MR. DENLEY: I'm just going to put an objection throughout
24 this. Go ahead and answer the question.

25 BY MR. FAWCETT:

1 A. So from the instructions that I received from the Assistant
2 Director of operations, the administrator system, I was given a
3 first mate checklist in which to provide a list of knowledge areas
4 that must be completed and signed off by a captain who is -- who's
5 the (indiscernible) captain in that particular vessel.

6 Q. So I think, going back to the senior deckhand, and you did a
7 good job, is there a check list for that, a knowledge-based,
8 similar to a first mate? And that's what I was trying to get to.
9 Are there things that you have to check off on a box for the
10 captain to designate you as a senior deckhand?

11 A. So there is a list of knowledge areas that I'm aware -- yes,
12 such a list does exist.

13 Q. And what's on that list?

14 A. The exact contents of that list? I don't quite recall
15 exactly in terms of specifics what's on that list.

16 Q. Would it contain, like -- for example, like how to start the
17 fire pump?

18 A. I -- yes, it would contain things of that nature.

19 Q. Would it contain, like, how to make a proper round of the
20 engine room?

21 A. Yes, it would contain this.

22 Q. So we had Captain Spillane in here, and he explained that the
23 engine room rounds take place at about -- well you said 15-minute
24 intervals. Does that jive with your understanding of what you
25 experienced with Captain Spillane?

1 A. No, I'm in agreement with his statement.

2 Q. Are there other captains that have a larger interval, like,
3 30 minutes or is it standard within the company based on your
4 experience that it's a 15-minute engine room round?

5 A. To my knowledge, there's no set standardization as far as the
6 frequency of engine room rounds. It all depends on the captain on
7 duty, (indiscernible) time and what vessel that we were on board
8 during that night.

9 Q. And just based on my knowledge on a particular vessel, the
10 only ones that could conduct an engine room round were senior
11 deckhands or above. Was that the way it was on your vessel?
12 Could a deckhand do an engine round?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And what would you look for in the engine room? Just very
15 general.

16 MR. DENLEY: Objection, relevance. Go ahead.

17 BY MR. FAWCETT:

18 A. So in particular what we're trained on to look for in the
19 engine room rounds is essentially -- these are essentials -- or
20 I'm sorry -- are senses are looking for things such as smoke, do
21 we see leakage of any fluids, be it the hydraulic fluid, any fuel
22 leaks, any oil leaks, is there any water that's leaking in from
23 the drive shafts for the propulsion system. Is there a fire, of
24 course, do we believe anything to be overheating. Engine room
25 checks are very surface level to that extent.

1 Q. So there's no -- is there any recording of readings and
2 temperatures, gauges, anything like that?

3 A. Yes, so in terms of gauges or ensuring that they're within
4 the graded margins, that nothing is going redline regions
5 (indiscernible) gauges.

6 Q. And then before a cruise, does anyone to your knowledge walk
7 the vessel to make sure, for example, all the fire extinguishers
8 are in their brackets and that they have not been used?

9 A. So as far as walking around the entirety of the vessel and
10 ensuring that the vessel's in a safe condition for its operation
11 that evening, that is all conducted by the captain who is on duty.
12 He holds the primary responsibility.

13 Q. So circling back to -- you mentioned the assistant director,
14 I think it's Mr. Schuler that helped you with your orientation. I
15 think you said it was -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- was it a
16 PowerPoint presentation?

17 A. That's correct. It was a presentation, as well as hands on,
18 walking through the entirety of the vessel at the time that we
19 trained on for orientation, and, yes, it was both a PowerPoint
20 presentation and hands-on training as well.

21 Q. Do you recall the presentation -- did it speak only to marine
22 crew or was it generic where it just said new hire orientation?

23 A. The presentation was very much acquainted to the duties that
24 was pertinent to a marine crew. And it was only marine crew who
25 was present during the orientation.

1 Q. So you were employed with City Cruises from the interval from
2 June of 2022 to the accident date. Correct?

3 A. That's incorrect. So it would be June of 2021.

4 Q. Okay. So there was an event in June of 2022 and that event
5 was a fire on another vessel. From that time until the accident
6 date, March 24th, did you receive any communication, presentations
7 or training about fire prevention? And I'm not talking about on
8 board the vessel specific, but any other training about fire
9 prevention or fire safety?

10 A. Apart from being trained that was particularly, meaning,
11 specifics to the events of the fire that happened in the other
12 vessel, particularly designed in response to that, no. I did not
13 receive any added or supplementary training apart from the just
14 standard drills that we do regularly pertaining to fires, which
15 should be all on the vessel.

16 Q. So I just have two more questions for now. So have you ever
17 seen sterno cans or the little glass candles, plastic, glass and
18 metal candles, thrown in trash cans?

19 A. I have not seen such, no.

20 Q. And have you witnessed the daytime or nighttime safety
21 announcement prior to the vessel getting underway?

22 A. Have I ever personally witnessed it before at any point or
23 just given that particular night in question?

24 Q. No, at any time.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And does anybody, that you're aware of, or have you reported
2 to the captain that they made the announcement?

3 A. No, the announcement is automated.

4 Q. And who demonstrates the proper wearing of a personal
5 floatation device?

6 A. In terms of as the cruise is getting underway when guests are
7 on board?

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. No one to my knowledge.

10 Q. Does anybody, as part of that demonstration, point out the
11 safety features? And by that, I could say emergency exits or what
12 to do in an emergency? I know the announcement says something,
13 but, you know, you're on an airplane the stewardess goes exits are
14 here, here and here, here's how you put on a life jacket. Have
15 you ever seen anything like that?

16 A. So during the safety announcements, all the proper safety
17 equipment and features of the vessels are included in the safety
18 announcement. As far as a physical demonstration of said safety
19 features and safety equipment such as life vests, no those are not
20 included.

21 Q. Thank you very much. That's all I have.

22 LCDR ██████████ Mr. Young on behalf of the National
23 Transportation Safety Board.

24 BY MR. YOUNG:

25 Q. Thank you again for excellent answers, too. We appreciate

1 it, you know. How is the safety announcement broadcast to the
2 customers?

3 A. So the safety announcement is broadcast through the intercom.
4 Like I mentioned before, it's an automated system. It's all pre-
5 recorded particularly for that vessel. And it could be heard
6 throughout all the decks.

7 Q. It actually presses play on the devices of the captain or the
8 DJ or who initiates that recording?

9 A. I'm not quite sure.

10 Q. Okay.

11 MR. DENLEY: And I'll just -- I'll object for the record,
12 just based on knowledge.

13 MR. YOUNG: Did you hear the --

14 (Crosstalk)

15 BY MR. YOUNG:

16 Q. On the night of the fire when you were departing, did you
17 hear the safety announcement that night?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. While you're making your rounds about the vessel, did you
20 notice if any tables had any lit candles on them?

21 A. From what I can recall that particular night, no, I couldn't
22 quite recall if there were any lit candles specifically.

23 Q. And would any sterno heaters, the little cans of fuel
24 underneath the catering would have been out on the decks lit in
25 use?

1 A. So, yes, underneath the trays in the wait stations, yes,
2 there was a whole lot of gas type heaters --

3 Q. Do you have any responsibilities with those sterno cans to
4 dispose of them or throw them out or extinguish them?

5 A. No, as the marine crew, I do not have the responsibility in
6 that area.

7 Q. You had mentioned that you made a few rounds of the engine
8 room. Did you smell anything burning in the engine room at any
9 time when you were making rounds on the night of the fire?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Did you see anything out of the ordinary that night?

12 A. No.

13 Q. You had mentioned also about a -- the fire suppression system
14 in the engine room. Can you tell me about that? What type of
15 system it is, that you understand, is in the engine room?

16 A. So in terms of fire suppression system, that particular
17 vessel does not have a fire suppression system in the engine room
18 space that I'm personally aware of. In reference to a previous
19 question where I answered all fire suppression system existing,
20 that was more in terms of a generalization, not specifically on
21 board the Spirit of Boston, but for another vessel that
22 (indiscernible) fire suppression system that I also was training
23 on.

24 Q. I just want to make sure that we were clear on that. As a
25 senior deckhand, did you assign any of the other deckhands to

1 remove any garbage after the cruise from any locations in the
2 galley area?

3 A. From what I can recall, no.

4 Q. And as a deckhand or any of the deckhands on your team, do
5 you -- I guess the better question is, who does remove the garbage
6 from the galley?

7 A. So specifically from the galley itself, the galley is not our
8 responsibility. That's all conducted by the galley staff. The
9 staff that (indiscernible) working in the galley space are
10 responsible for that area and the trash.

11 Q. And would the wait station be part of the galley, on One Deck
12 or is that part of your area? That's a little bit of a gray area
13 because it's outside the galley. Who would be responsible for
14 that garbage?

15 A. So my experience as far as the wait station areas, is one
16 there's an overlap of responsibilities. When you (indiscernible)
17 in those areas, as well as restaurant staff, as well as -- of the
18 trash in those areas. As far as specific just galley stuff trash,
19 I am not aware of any of sort of arrangement.

20 Q. Is there somebody in charge of the galley?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And what's their title?

23 A. So I've heard [REDACTED] (ph.) -- I believe -- I do know that
24 there's a galley supervisory, and you'd have the chef and you'd
25 have the sous chef. Whether all those members were present

1 serving as (indiscernible) capacities on that particular night of
2 the 24th, I do not recall if they were over there nor do I have
3 any knowledge of the members -- all the staff members serving in
4 this capacity were present at that time.

5 Q. Understood. And my last question is, when you're making your
6 tea in the wait station, from what we understand there was a
7 coffee maker there that had maybe a carafe or something. And then
8 next to it is a water fountain, if you will, or spigot. Did you
9 use the spigot to fill your water or did you use that coffee
10 machine with an associated heated water spout?

11 A. I used the water spigot to dispense the hot water.

12 Q. So not the coffee machine?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. Two handles and like a sink almost, faucet, that's how you
15 made your tea?

16 A. So the water spigot was attached to a basin and had a red
17 latch that you lift up and then the hot water would release and
18 the water spigot. So I made hot water for the tea.

19 Q. Do you remember anything else in position of anything in that
20 wait station? You know, if you're looking at the coffee machine,
21 do you remember what was behind you on that bulkhead between the
22 wait station and the pantry, just so we can understand. That's
23 the room where the fire happened and we're just trying to
24 understand if you saw anything out of place?

25 A. So behind the wait station, directly behind the coffee

1 station -- we'll start from there -- there is a wall, bulkhead,
2 rather. And then immediately to the left of that is an opening
3 where you could walk further down into the galley space. And
4 Immediately to the right is a serving prep station. Typically,
5 from what I saw that night, that's where desserts were being
6 prepared. Did I see any, like irregularities or any abnormalities,
7 no I did not see any irregularities or abnormalities in that space
8 from what I observed.

9 Q. And after the vessel moored and you did your rounds and -- do
10 you remember about -- I think I may have asked but I didn't write
11 it down -- what time you departed the vessel?

12 A. I do not have an approximate -- I do not have an exact time,
13 but I can approximate it between 10:30 to 10:40 is when I left the
14 vessel.

15 Q. And does the galley crew leave prior to the marine crew or
16 are they still on when you leave, for that night?

17 A. That night in particular or just in general?

18 Q. That night.

19 A. That night in particular, I am unaware if they left either
20 prior to us or after.

21 Q. Thank you very much, I appreciate you.

22 LCDR ██████████ Mr. Denley, do you have any questions?

23 MR. DENLEY: Yes, just a couple of questions.

24 BY MR. DENLEY:

25 Q. So you commented about -- so just to be clear -- you -- at

1 any point on the night in question, did you see any sort of fire?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Did you return -- after departing the vessel at -- between
4 10:40 and 10:50 or 10:30 and 10:40 -- did you return to the vessel
5 at all?

6 A. No.

7 Q. So you heard about the fire after the fact?

8 A. That's correct. I heard about the fire the next morning.

9 Q. The Coast Guard asked you quite a few questions about the
10 training to be a deckhand or training to be a mate. On the night
11 in question, you weren't on board, correct, when the fire
12 occurred?

13 A. I was not present when the fire occurred.

14 Q. So whether you're a deckhand or whether you're a senior
15 deckhand or whether you were a mate, you would not have been able
16 to put the fire out on that night. Correct?

17 A. I would not be able to put out a fire because I was not
18 present during the fire.

19 Q. And -- yes -- no, that's it.

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Lt. Commander?

21 BY LT. CMDR [REDACTED]

22 Q. Do you know how the sternos and candles are disposed of?

23 A. No, I am not aware. That's an area that the galley
24 restaurant staff is responsible for.

25 Q. You've never seen one in the trash can or have never seen

1 it --

2 A. From what I can recall, I do believe that they place the
3 sternos in one big bucket of water, then dispose of them in a
4 (indiscernible) trash bag. But whatever happens to them after
5 that, I am not aware of the exact procedure as far as disposal of
6 the --

7 Q. And Mr. Young had asked you about the serving station on One
8 Deck, the first deck serving station. As you are facing your
9 coffee and the coffee maker, do you recall what was directly
10 behind you on that bulkhead?

11 A. What was directly behind me in the bulkhead was just a wall
12 and then there were some trash bins that were behind this wall.

13 Q. I guess there's -- was there anything else that you recall
14 that was along that wall?

15 A. There's also a bin for linens, such as -- there was napkins
16 or tablecloths. So that's in the receptacle.

17 Q. And is it like that throughout the night or things move --
18 you know, at the beginning of the cruise, does it have both trash
19 -- a linen bin and a trash bin, and then, you know, the linen bin
20 moved to get processed off the vessel or brought up to the dance
21 floor to be -- so is that area kind of fluid in action once it's
22 in there or is it pretty --

23 A. So from what I can speak of while we're underway, they stay
24 in their respective spots. Once the vessel came back and returned
25 to the dock, from what I can recall, to my knowledge, I moved --

1 both the trash bin and linen bin were in separate areas. But
2 whether or not the restaurant or the galley staff moved it for any
3 reason, I am unaware of any --

4 Q. And just quickly, what is the smoking policy aboard the
5 Spirit of Boston?

6 A. The smoking policy, as I understand, as far as guests, guests
7 are usually instructed to smoke -- they are able to smoke, rather,
8 on the sky decks. So that's the very top deck, (indiscernible)
9 located directly by the bridge. That's where they're allowed to
10 smoke.

11 Q. And in doing your security and safety rounds, have you ever
12 found somebody smoking in the not designated smoking area?

13 A. As far as the night of the 24th specifically or just a
14 generalization?

15 Q. The night of the 24th.

16 A. No, I did not see any guests smoking in the --

17 Q. And then at any point, have you ever seen anybody smoking in
18 the non-designated smoking area?

19 A. Again, is that a general --

20 Q. It is not a generalization. It is a -- based upon your
21 experience aboard as the deckhand.

22 A. So in my experience, yes, in the past, (indiscernible)
23 cruises, I observed guests smoking in the non-smoking, designated
24 areas.

25 Q. And then what -- did you provide that and (indiscernible) or

1 did you give them any instructions at that point?

2 A. That's correct. So at that point give them instructions to
3 smoke in the designated area.

4 Q. How about the crew's smoking area? Where is that located?

5 A. So as far as a designated crew smoking area, I received
6 instructions as far as where it's appropriate for crew members to
7 smoke. In my experience as a deckhand where I have observed --
8 and again, sir, are crew members being -- and that's -- does that
9 mean defined as the captain, the first mate, and the deckhands?

10 Q. It is being defined, as per this question, as anybody who is
11 on board as an employee of the vessel.

12 A. That's right.

13 Q. So to include the marine crew and restaurant crew?

14 A. Okay. So specifically, what I have observed as far as the
15 vessel's policy, throughout other cruises and based on my
16 experience, I have observed galley staff, restaurant staff smoking
17 out on the stern deck (indiscernible) where we keep the trash
18 bins. I observed them smoking in those areas, both marine crews
19 and --

20 Q. And were -- have you -- in the course of your duties, have
21 you ever observed -- you ever seen an ashtray or area that they
22 can dispose of their -- the butts of their cigarettes out?

23 A. There's no formalized ashtray. From what I recall, they do
24 have buckets --

25 Q. Have you ever seen them dispose of that bucket? Do you know

1 where they get rid of that bucket?

2 A. I have never observed the disposal of the bucket.

3 Q. Have you ever seen anybody smoking inside the --

4 A. No.

5 BY MR. YOUNG:

6 Q. I have a -- pardon me -- a relatively important question. So
7 I want to go back to the fire drill that you observed, and I'd
8 like you to really sort of maybe think about it. The one we
9 talked about the fire in the galley. So think about it for a
10 minute. I'm going to ask you a couple of questions. Kind of put
11 your head on that time. So how long ago was that?

12 A. So that particular instance I'm referring to, that drill I
13 have a vision in my head, that had occurred, let's say, at some
14 point the summer of -- I believe in the summer of 2022, if I
15 recall.

16 Q. Can you recall who the captain was that led that drill?

17 A. I believe that drill -- the captain who led that drill was
18 also Rob Schuler.

19 Q. Now the -- would I be fair to say that the people that work
20 in the galley, that -- which is, like, I think it's the back of
21 the house. Is that it, the back of the house?

22 (Crosstalk)

23 BY MR. YOUNG:

24 Q. All right, so I'll rephrase. The people who work in the
25 galley. Are they usually the same people who you work with all

1 the time on the Spirit of Boston? Do you recognize them, you
2 know, you know the galley supervisor and the sous chef and those
3 kinds of people?

4 A. The galley staff is very consistent on the Spirit of Boston,
5 yes.

6 Q. So now I want you to focus on that fire drill that was --
7 that took place in the galley, and I want to ask you if, while the
8 drill was taking place, were there any of the galley personnel
9 just in the area -- they don't have -- they're not participating.
10 They're just there.

11 A. So first, I would like to preface that this drill that's
12 specifically (indiscernible) in my mind, was not specifically on
13 the Spirit of Boston itself. This particular galley drill was
14 just part of just the general training of the deckhand as part of
15 our -- as part of our regular pre-cruise duties. This particular
16 drill that I'm recalling in my mind, this was on board the
17 Odyssey, not specific to the Spirit of Boston. So going back to
18 your question whether or not there were galley staff or just in
19 the general vicinity, I can't quite recall if they were given my
20 (indiscernible) at that time.

21 Q. Okay. And my question was talking about the Spirit of
22 Boston, so thank you for the clarification. But in the drill, did
23 the assistant director, Mr. Schuler, did he tell you when to use a
24 fire blanket versus, like -- this kind of fire used the fire
25 blanket and this kind of fire you're going to use the fire

1 extinguisher. Did he talk about that?

2 A. Yes, that was touched on.

3 Q. And what did he say?

4 A. So in particular, if it was a simple pot that was on fire or
5 it was very small, just a localized in a certain area near the
6 stove, we can then take the fire blanket and place it over the
7 fire.

8 Q. And did he drag it out and use it?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And how big was it? Just approximate's fine.

11 A. The fire blanket was probably about, let's say, half of the
12 length of this table (indiscernible).

13 Q. So would I be right to say five or six feet? This is
14 generally six feet, a man's arm span. So would you say it was
15 about that long?

16 A. Yes, I would say so.

17 Q. And then do you recall if during training someone said that
18 if there was a fire in something like a trash can -- this is any
19 training -- that you could use a fire extinguisher as your first
20 means of defense to put the fire out?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And what's your first duty if there's a fire?

23 A. So the first step to be -- is it a trash can fire?

24 Q. Well, just if there's a fire on board and you're working on
25 the vessel, what's your first duty?

1 A. So by being the first person (indiscernible) fire, the first
2 reaction would be to get any non-essential personnel
3 (indiscernible) of the fire itself in terms of putting out any
4 guests or restaurant staff, make sure that everyone's at a safe
5 distance away from the fire. And then we report it immediately to
6 the captain and -- the appropriate fire extinguishing equipment
7 (indiscernible) the fire.

8 Q. That was very helpful. Thank you very much. I have no
9 further questions.

10 LCDR [REDACTED] (Indiscernible). That concludes our interview
11 today. Mr. DeArco, thank you for being here -- and we'll turn off
12 the recording.

13 (Whereupon, 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: FIRE ABOARD THE *SPIRIT OF BOSTON*
NEAR THE BOSTON SPORTS DISTRICT
IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS ON
MARCH 24, 2023
Interview of Jaydin DeArco

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM022

PLACE: Boston, Massachusetts

DATE: April 5, 2023

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.



Maria Socorro R. Abellar
Transcriber