

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

\* \* \* \* \*

Investigation of: \*

FIRE ABOARD THE *SPIRIT OF BOSTON* \*

NEAR THE BOSTON SPORTS DISTRICT \* Accident No.: DCA23FM022

IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, \*

ON MARCH 24, 2023 \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: CASSANDRA GRIFFIN, Restaurant Manager  
*Spirit of Boston*

Boston, Massachusetts

Tuesday,  
April 4, 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  
United States Coast Guard

██████████ ██████████ Lieutenant Commander, Legal Advisor  
United States Coast Guard

ERIC DENLEY, Counsel  
City Cruises

I N D E X

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Cassandra Griffin:	
By LCDR [REDACTED]	5
By Mr. Fawcett	27
By Mr. Young	38
By Mr. Denley	48
By LCDR [REDACTED]	49
By Mr. Fawcett	49
By Mr. Young	51
By Mr. Fawcett	54
By Mr. Young	54
By Mr. Fawcett	55

I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 LT [REDACTED] We are conducting this interview under the  
3 applicable Coast Guard regulations.

4 First, I'd like to introduce the interview team. Today is  
5 April 4th, 2023, and this is the interview of Ms. Cassandra  
6 Griffin, First Coast Guard District Legal Conference Room.

7 If we could first go around the room. Mr. Fawcett.

8 LCDR [REDACTED] I'm Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm  
9 with the District 1 Formal Investigation Team of the Coast Guard,  
10 and my last name is spelled [REDACTED].

11 MR. YOUNG: Good morning. I'm Brian Young. I'm with the  
12 National Transportation Safety Board. My last name is spelled Y-  
13 o-u-n-g.

14 MR. FAWCETT: Hi, Cassandra. My name is Keith Fawcett. I'm  
15 with the Coast Guard. I'm a civilian, and my last name is F-a-w-  
16 c-e-t-t. I'm with this investigation team.

17 LCDR [REDACTED] Good morning. I'm Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED]  
18 [REDACTED] I'm the legal advisor to the investigation. Last name  
19 is spelled [REDACTED].

20 LT [REDACTED] And my name is Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] last name  
21 spelled [REDACTED]. We are conducting an interview to examine  
22 the events surrounding the fire aboard the excursion vessel,  
23 *Spirit of Boston* which occurred on March 24th, 2023, in Boston  
24 Harbor.

25 If you can go ahead and please introduce yourself and spell

1 your last name please.

2 MS. GRIFFIN: I'm Cassandra Griffin. My last name is spelled  
3 G-r-i-f-f-i-n.

4 LT [REDACTED] And are you represented by counsel today?

5 MS. GRIFFIN: Yes.

6 LT [REDACTED] And, sir, would you please.

7 MR. DENLEY: Eric Denley, D-e-n-l-e-y, City Cruises, party in  
8 interest in the investigation.

9 LT [REDACTED] Thank you, sir. Ma'am, so you may change, modify  
10 anything that you say in this interview. If you recall things at  
11 a later time, you can always go back and change an answer or  
12 whatnot. You may also appeal the final results of the -- of any  
13 reports of investigation that may result from this interview. For  
14 information about the Coast Guard Marine Casualty and  
15 Investigations, the U.S. Coast Guard Safety Marine Manual, Volume  
16 5, is our guidance for conducting these formal investigations.

17 So at this point, we're going to go ahead and being the  
18 interview. Ms. [REDACTED]

19 INTERVIEW OF CASSANDRA GRIFFIN

20 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

21 Q. Ms. Griffin, thank you again for being here today. How we're  
22 going to start this is we're just going to go through your  
23 background, employment, training and just have a few questions and  
24 we'll get into the events of March 24th. Can you tell us how long  
25 you've been employed with Hornblower Cruises?

1 A. About 6 1/2 years.

2 Q. And was that entire time on the *Spirit of Boston*? Have you  
3 worked on this vessel.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And did you start off as a restaurant manager or --

6 A. No, I started as a hostess.

7 Q. Okay. And can you kind of tell us how you worked up to  
8 restaurant manager?

9 A. Yeah. I started as a hostess in 2016, became a server about  
10 2 years later, bartender, then bar manager, and became a  
11 restaurant manager last year.

12 Q. And when you were hired on as a hostess or as you progressed,  
13 what training -- can you kind of take us through the orientation  
14 that you had from the company when you first hired on?

15 A. Yeah. They do like a general orientation first, where you're  
16 just trained on how the boat works as opposed to a server, I was  
17 just trained on like table numbers and floor plans and stuff like  
18 that. And then they do basic safety training with the marine crew  
19 where they go over man overboard procedures, safety procedures,  
20 suspicious packages, active shooters and how to use a fire  
21 extinguisher.

22 Q. Okay. And did you receive any other training as you became a  
23 server and restaurant manager, did you get more training or was it  
24 just --

25 A. No.

1 Q. Can you kind of in your own opinion, in your own words, what  
2 are your primary duties on board the vessel as a restaurant  
3 manager?

4 A. As the restaurant manager, just I'm responsible for the  
5 staff, delegating tasks to them, making sure that the cruise is  
6 running efficiently, taking care of guest needs and just assisting  
7 my staff with whatever they need.

8 Q. And can you kind of tell us, do you have any other duties on  
9 board other than your primary duties?

10 A. I handle money, will occasionally help the bar if they need  
11 it.

12 Q. And are you familiar with or have seen any Hornblower  
13 policies or plans that describe your duties as a restaurant  
14 manager?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And are you familiar with or have you seen any policy or  
17 plans that describe your duties during an emergency on the vessel?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Can you kind of walk us through, in your opinion again, what  
20 your duties are during an emergency on board the vessel? Let's  
21 say if an emergency were to happen, like what's your role as  
22 restaurant manager?

23 A. Like if it was during a cruise?

24 Q. Sure.

25 A. We would alert the marine crew. They're kind of in charge of

1 handling any emergency situations on board.

2 Q. And can you kind of describe any kind of training you  
3 received from the company regarding firefighting or what to do  
4 during a fire on the vessel?

5 MR. DENLEY: I'm going to object, just as to her  
6 responsibilities or (indiscernible).

7 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

8 Q. Can you kind of take us through then if there was a fire on  
9 board, like how would you notify the marine crew? Like what does  
10 that look like?

11 A. We have radios. We have walkie-talkies. So if I saw  
12 something, I would radio the captain. He would handle it from  
13 there.

14 Q. Does everyone on your staff have radios or is it just --

15 A. The managers do.

16 Q. And have you ever yourself participated in a fire drill on  
17 board the *Spirit of Boston*?

18 A. No.

19 Q. And at any time during your orientation, I know you had  
20 mentioned fire extinguishers, have you received any kind of -- can  
21 you bring us through that specific training you received?

22 A. It's very basic. They just ask if everyone knows how to use  
23 a fire extinguisher, and then they just very quickly grab one and  
24 just show. They don't actually like pull the pin out, but they  
25 just show you, you would pull the pin and how to hold it.



1 Q. And have you ever had to use one other than even on the  
2 vessel, maybe at home or --

3 A. I've never had to use one.

4 Q. Have you ever received any training or participated in any  
5 drills that exercised an emergency response plan? Can you kind of  
6 describe the training or exercises that you participated in? Any  
7 kind of exercises that -- any kind of emergency on board that you  
8 participated in?

9 A. No.

10 Q. If a fire starts in the galley, in your area, during a dinner  
11 cruise say, can you kind of take us through the process that you  
12 would follow, what you were trained to do, particularly in the  
13 galley?

14 A. I wasn't trained for that.

15 Q. So just alerting the marine crew?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Are there fire blankets on board the vessel?

18 A. I'm not sure.

19 Q. Have you ever been trained how to use a fire blanket? Was  
20 that in --

21 MR. DENLEY: I'm going to kind of object to the line of  
22 questioning. She's kind of described what her scope is in an  
23 emergency. So.

24 LCDR ██████████ I was just determining what like -- she said  
25 she was trained in the use of a fire extinguisher. I'm just

1 trying to see if she was --

2 MR. DENLEY: Oh, okay.

3 LCDR [REDACTED] -- trained in any other firefighting equipment,  
4 you know.

5 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

6 Q. And I'm just kind of touching on it. I know that you've said  
7 that you would alert the marine crew, but do you know where are  
8 the fire extinguishers are located in the area that you work as  
9 the restaurant manager on board the vessel?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Can you kind of walk us through that, where they are?

12 A. I know that there's fire extinguishers (indiscernible)  
13 corners of the boat, like every corner basically on each deck.  
14 And there are fire extinguishers behind the staircases.

15 Q. As the restaurant manager, do you conduct any training with  
16 your staff and your servers?

17 A. Not safety training, but just general training, yes.

18 Q. Can you kind of take us through the general training that you  
19 do?

20 A. Yeah, just overall, depending on their position, if it's  
21 bartender, I train them on where to find all the stuff they need  
22 for the bar. Servers, I train them on how to set tables, how to  
23 approach guests, how to use the POS system to ring in drinks.

24 Q. Can you kind of describe the POS system?

25 A. It's just a computer that they just ring stuff in on.

1 Q. Thank you. Can you talk a little about who your supervisor  
2 is and who reports to you?

3 A. My supervisor is our food and beverage director, Thatcher  
4 Trombly.

5 Q. I'm sorry.

6 A. Thatcher Trombly.

7 Q. Oh, okay.

8 A. That's my supervisor.

9 Q. And how does it work with your employees under you as  
10 restaurant manager? Who do you have? Who do you supervise?

11 A. I supervise all of the bartenders, servers and server  
12 assistants and the hosts.

13 Q. And how does that work when there's like another restaurant  
14 manager? Do you -- like do you have the same people all the time  
15 or is it just on a dinner cruise? Are you responsible for that?

16 A. Like the staff you mean?

17 Q. Um-hum.

18 A. We have -- we rotate throughout the staff. It's not always  
19 the same people working. There's usually more than one manager on  
20 board. I am the senior restaurant manager. So even if there's  
21 another manager on board, they'll usually come to me if they need  
22 something.

23 Q. And how do you determine how many managers are on a certain  
24 cruise and --

25 A. I don't schedule the managers.

1 Q. Who does?

2 A. My supervisor does.

3 Q. As part of your condition of employment, are you enrolled in  
4 any kind of random drug testing program?

5 A. No.

6 Q. So we're going to kind of move into the events of March 24th.  
7 I'd just like to, and you can take a second to gather your  
8 thoughts, and just kind of bring us through that evening. Just  
9 described what you smelled, what you saw, what you witnessed,  
10 interactions with others? And you can kind of take us through  
11 from the time you arrived at work until the time you departed the  
12 pier on the 25th, if you departed here on the 25th?

13 A. I got there around 2 p.m. on the 24th, about 2 hours before  
14 my staff came in. I counted money. We assigned the servers'  
15 sections for the night, and kind of just came up with a game plan  
16 with the other manager, Buck Howard (ph.), on the cruise, what our  
17 reset (ph.) was going to look like with all of our stuff situated.  
18 And then my staff came in. We just got them prepared for the  
19 night, gave them all their sections where they were going to be  
20 and just kind of started working. We started boarding at 6 and we  
21 didn't have a hostess that night. So the managers, we were  
22 hosting during boarding. I spent maybe --

23 MR. DENLEY: Maybe stop there. While I understand maybe the  
24 whole cruise might be interesting, I guess I don't know from --  
25 maybe just have a conversation about sort of the scope. I mean I

1 don't know how relevant it is. All the guests were off when the  
2 fire occurred, and the cruise had functionally ended. So I mean I  
3 think just given the timeline, I wonder -- given the timeline and  
4 sort of given where we think origin happened, I'm wondering just  
5 kind of where you guys are going, you know, start at the beginning  
6 of your day and bring me all the way, all the way through it. I  
7 think if we had different facts and sort of different situation,  
8 then I think it would be sort of be irrelevant. And I guess I'm  
9 not sure that this. Maybe we could have a conversation about sort  
10 of scope of this.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] Sure. I was just trying to establish, and I'll  
12 get more into this. I do have follow-up questions after, just to  
13 kind of like how the tables are set up, how they're done and since  
14 you did that that evening, and set -- I'm just trying to get a  
15 feeling of how all that went down and how they're arranged, but  
16 I'll get more specific into that as far as that scope, how they  
17 set up the dining room that evening and --

18 MR. DENLEY: Okay.

19 LCDR [REDACTED] And you don't have to -- I mean you don't have  
20 to be specific with the cruise, but when you get more into when  
21 the passengers departed and when the crew departed as well, kind  
22 of get more detailed into that, but just kind of give us a general  
23 review of how the staff came on board that evening, who was there,  
24 how many staff were on board so we know. That's kind of where I  
25 was going with that.

1 MR. DENLEY: Okay.

2 MS. GRIFFIN: There was 16 of us total, as part of the hosts,  
3 as far as myself and my staff. At the end of the cruise, the  
4 bartenders are just cleaning the bars. The servers start tearing  
5 off the table. They take all the linen off the tables. They  
6 reset them, and I usually just kind of went into doing paperwork  
7 while they're doing that. They're just kind of cleaning and  
8 detailing plates and silverware (indiscernible) for the next  
9 cruise.

10 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

11 Q. Can you kind of bring us through then once you were in that  
12 process, kind of what happened starting with the events of the  
13 fire?

14 A. Yeah. That first deck, I was on that deck with the other  
15 manager counting money and everyone else was upstairs on the  
16 second deck. That was the deck we were setting for the next day.  
17 One of my servers, Sharon, had come downstairs and I had allowed  
18 here to just stay down there and finish the work that had to be  
19 done down there because she has a hard time going up and down the  
20 stairs. And she called my name, that she thought something was on  
21 fire. I turned around because my back was facing her, and I just  
22 turned around from where I was sitting, and I saw smoke. So I got  
23 up and walked over there, and then we saw sparks -- I saw sparks  
24 coming from what looked like the wall. I looked at Sharon. She  
25 was just asking if I knew what that was, and I didn't. And then

1 she asked if there was a fire extinguisher, and I said, yes. And  
2 right when she said that, that's when the flames kind of broke out  
3 on the floor, and I just -- I had her back up, and I made the  
4 decision to just have the other manager tell everyone else to get  
5 off the boat, because the flames just seemed to be spreading  
6 quickly, and we weren't trained to handle that.

7 Q. Kind of take us through after -- so you got the other manager  
8 to get everyone off until the time until you departed.

9 A. Yeah. I immediately sent the other manager upstairs, told  
10 him to get everyone off the boat. I saw him grab his phone, and  
11 so I wasn't sure if he was calling 911 or not. I assumed he was.  
12 And I just went around and made sure that everyone got off the  
13 boat, and there was no one on other decks. I was the last one to  
14 get off and, that's when I confirmed with him that he was on the  
15 phone with 911. And then I called my supervisor, and he called  
16 everybody else.

17 Q. And then did you kind of wait around here?

18 A. Yeah, we all stayed. I mean nobody could have left anyways  
19 because we left all of our belongings on the boat. So no one had  
20 keys or anything to go home. I had everyone get off the immediate  
21 dock because I just wasn't sure like how serious it was, and if  
22 there was going to be an explosion or anything. And I didn't want  
23 anyone standing close to the boat. So I had everyone kind of just  
24 make their way to the street while we waited for the fire  
25 department.

1 Q. So I'm going to kind of just ask some clarifying questions  
2 just about what you've told us. Can you kind of go back to the  
3 time where your crew's staging or getting ready for work and  
4 assigning all the servers. Can you kind of talk to us about the  
5 table setup for that cruise, for that cruise specifically? Like  
6 what is a typical table setup that you did?

7 A. We just -- each table has a tablecloth on it, a napkin for  
8 each setting, silverware, salt and pepper and a candle.

9 Q. And is that a typical setup for an evening cruise or was  
10 anything different about March 24th?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And are there any ever like special events on board like  
13 weddings, birthdays, anniversaries?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And were there any special events on March 24th, on that  
16 evening?

17 A. Not a special event. There was a high school group on board.

18 Q. Can you kind of -- I know you mentioned the candle. Can you  
19 describe lighting arrangement on the table? Like what does that  
20 look and what is it?

21 A. Sure. A candle is just in the center of the table. We have  
22 a small glass votive. We have little like liquid wax fillers that  
23 place inside of votives.

24 Q. And do you fill every evening or are they like reusable? Are  
25 they --



1 A. They are reusable. They last like 6 hours, and our cruise is  
2 only 2 or 3 hours. We usually get a couple of uses out of them.

3 Q. Can you kind of talk to us about the food setup? How the  
4 food's served. Is it like buffet style?

5 A. It's a buffet.

6 Q. And how do you keep the food warm for that?

7 A. We use Sternos.

8 Q. Can you kind of describe the setup? Is there like a buffet  
9 on each level or --

10 A. There is physically a buffet on each level. We don't always  
11 use every buffet, but they are there.

12 Q. And that evening, did you use one buffet?

13 A. We used two of them, two to three.

14 Q. On the main deck?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. Where are all of the supplies that you just mentioned,  
17 the Sternos, the candles? Where are those supplies stored on the  
18 vessel? You said you got multiple use out of them.

19 A. Yeah. The Sternos are in the galley supplies. So I don't  
20 store those. But we keep the candles stored in the wait stations  
21 enough to spread that deck, and then anything extra is stored down  
22 in our storage area down below.

23 Q. And the Sternos, where are they stored? You don't store  
24 them.

25 A. I don't store any Sternos.

1 Q. Can you kind of take us through now the clean up process  
2 specifically the clean up process that occurred on March 24th?  
3 Who does that? How does that work? What does a typical clean up  
4 look like?

5 A. Yeah. Again, everyone was on the second deck, just resetting  
6 the tables up there. I had two server assistants in the wait  
7 station on the first deck. That's where we had to do all of the  
8 detailing of the plates and so forth. That's where we store all  
9 of our silverware. So it's just easiest for them to clean  
10 everything in that area. There was only two down there. One of  
11 them was upstairs vacuuming, mop the dance floor, reset the  
12 tables.

13 Q. And when does this clean up process typically start?

14 A. As soon as we dock which is 10 o'clock.

15 Q. Are there passengers still on board when the clean up process  
16 starts?

17 A. No, we wait until everyone's off.

18 Q. So I know you said the candles, you sometimes get multiple  
19 use but what happens when they're done with the candles? How do  
20 you determine when they're done? What happens with them when  
21 they're used?

22 A. At the end of a cruise, we just blow the candles out once the  
23 guests are off board. If we are resetting for another dinner  
24 cruise, we just leave the candle on the table for resetting onto  
25 the table. If we're not using it, then it gets stored away in

1 the wait station.

2 Q. Do the candles ever get thrown away?

3 A. No, they're emptied.

4 Q. And what happens to the Sternos once they're used for the  
5 buffet when you're cleaning up the buffet?

6 A. I don't clean up the buffet. That's all the galley.

7 Q. Okay. Does the galley, do they like -- they don't work for  
8 you? They're separate.

9 A. Yes, the galley is separate. I'm not their supervisor.

10 Q. Whose the supervisor for the back of the house?

11 A. They have multiple supervisors in the galley and then they  
12 have a sous chef, Lance, and then Random (ph.) is our head chef.

13 Q. So when you describe the staff, like your staff is separate.  
14 You have like the front of the house.

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. And then the back of house is separate. Can you kind of tell  
17 us who -- I know you said an employee came down to the main deck  
18 and then all the other employees were on the second deck. Are all  
19 the employees responsible for clean up or are there some specific  
20 ones that are responsible?

21 A. All the front of house employees clean.

22 Q. And then in that wait station that you're talking about who  
23 do the clean up, can you kind of describe the trash bins in that  
24 area?

25 A. Yeah. We usually have a yellow bin in that area for like

1 dirty linen. We don't typically keep a trash barrel in that wait  
2 station just because any dishes that are cleared on that deck go  
3 directly to the galley. Whereas other wait stations, they like  
4 dump the food out and bring them down. So we don't usually have a  
5 trash can in the first deck wait station.

6 Q. So there's designated bins in different areas, the linen bin  
7 and trash bin?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. If you were -- do you happen to know, and I know again you  
10 said it's back of the house. Do you know which one of those trash  
11 cans the Sternos or the candles get disposed of?

12 A. We only have one bin like specifically for trash. So it  
13 would go in that one.

14 Q. And can you kind of describe that bin? Is it like a metal  
15 bin? Is it a plastic bin?

16 A. I believe it's plastic.

17 Q. Can you kind of bring us through -- does any of your staff on  
18 board that you know of smoke?

19 A. (Indiscernible).

20 Q. Can you kind of talk to us about the company's smoking policy  
21 on board the *Spirit of Boston*?

22 A. Guests are not allowed to smoke on board at all. The staff  
23 has been allowed to in designated areas that are out of the view  
24 of guests.

25 Q. Can you kind of bring us through those designated areas?

1 A. The only one that I actually know of is the back trash area  
2 behind the galley. It's just -- that's where they just keep all  
3 the trash and there's like a refrigerator back there. That's one  
4 area where staff can smoke. Outside on the main deck.

5 Q. And where do the employees -- do you know where they dispose  
6 of their cigarette butts in that designated smoking area?

7 A. I'm not sure.

8 Q. Do you know if anyone that evening, any of your staff, while  
9 they were cleaning up had a smoke break while the vessel was  
10 moored that evening?

11 A. I don't know.

12 Q. Do you happen to know that even though that's designated  
13 areas, do you know if anyone smokes anywhere else on board the  
14 vessel after hours?

15 A. No.

16 Q. We're kind of go back to the moment the fire was discovered,  
17 and I know you walked up through and you described sparks and the  
18 flames, but can you kind of just take us through exactly like what  
19 you smelled, what you saw? Smoke. Kind of expand on that, and  
20 what you actually visually witnessed.

21 A. Okay. I don't really remember what it smelled like. I  
22 remember when I first saw the smoke from where I was sitting and  
23 just turned around, it didn't even look like there was a lot of  
24 smoke. I -- my first thought was that something was just burning  
25 in the galley. I didn't think there was a fire, and then I walked

1 over there immediately. It was like racks of glassware that they  
2 have stored in that wait station that are up against the wall, and  
3 so it just looked like sparks were coming from in between the wall  
4 and those racks. I couldn't actually see. I could see them  
5 shooting out from behind and above the racks. And then the flames  
6 kind of just started. It looked like they were coming from  
7 underneath those water racks. Those racks are about an inch off  
8 the floor and maybe an inch away from the wall. And, again I just  
9 -- I don't -- I couldn't see where it was actually starting from.  
10 I just saw the flames moving forward towards me from the wall.

11 Q. So I'm sure that was a scary moment for you. You kind of  
12 bring us through this going through your mind. What were you  
13 thinking when you saw that?

14 A. Yeah, I mean I had to try to just like process it for a  
15 second. Mean and Sharon were just trying to figure out, like what  
16 was on fire. We were just kind of confused. I contemplated  
17 grabbing a fire extinguisher, the closest one to me that I saw,  
18 and that one was kind of by the staircase which was on the other  
19 side of the deck that I was on. And in my mind, it takes the same  
20 amount of time to get there to go up the stairs to tell everyone  
21 to get off the boat, but I just knew that it wouldn't have made a  
22 difference if I went and grabbed it and went back to that wait  
23 station. The flames were just too much for me. So I just -- I  
24 told Sharon to just get off the boat, and I immediately sent the  
25 other manager upstairs to tell everyone to get off the boat. I

1 just started walking through to make sure that there was nobody on  
2 any of the other decks.

3 Q. And I know we had briefly mentioned it was just the wait  
4 staff on board but were there any marine crew members present  
5 during the discovery of the fire?

6 A. No.

7 Q. And other than yourself and your staff member, who else  
8 visually initially saw the fire?

9 A. The other manager before I sent him upstairs.

10 Q. And what was his name?

11 A. Jeremy Leach (ph.).

12 Q. Do you happen to if there are any fire doors on the main deck  
13 that you work that you know anything about?

14 A. (Indiscernible).

15 Q. Can you kind of take it -- take us through. I know you had  
16 just said that you sent Jeremy upstairs to get everyone. Was it  
17 just kind of word of mouth? Did you use the radios, kind of how  
18 did you get everybody to muster and get off safely off the vessel?

19 A. No, he just went upstairs. Everyone was kind of in the same  
20 area cleaning, and so he just told everyone they needed to get off  
21 the boat right away.

22 Q. And you were the one, you said you went to every deck just to  
23 make sure everyone was off?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. I know you kind of explained that if the marine crew were on

1 board, that's the ones you would notify. Are there any procedures  
2 when the marine crew's not on board, how the staff should respond,  
3 like who they should contact? Can you kind of bring us through  
4 that? I know if during a cruise there would be the marine crew,  
5 you would alert them, but is there any policy or training you  
6 received if the crew wasn't on board?

7 A. (Indiscernible).

8 Q. And did you have a designated muster area? Was that kind of  
9 in any plans, that if you had -- if you got up to pier and had to  
10 evacuate the vessel, is there like a -- you know how in a building  
11 you -- there's like a muster area where you need to go. Is there  
12 anything like that?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Did anyone go back on board the vessel prior to the fire  
15 department arriving?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Can you kind of bring us through that and who went back on  
18 board?

19 A. One of the servers ran back on board. He was just kind of  
20 panicking and grabbed a lifejacket. I don't know why. And one of  
21 the DJs ran back on board to grab their laptop. That was it.

22 Q. Did you have any conversations with them after they ran back  
23 on board?

24 A. I tried to stop them from going back on board, but I didn't  
25 really say anything to them.



1 Q. Can you kind of describe the scene of you and your employees?  
2 I know you said you went from [sic] the pier and then you moved  
3 them safely to the street. Can you kind of describe the feeling  
4 of the scene, what everybody was experiencing?

5 A. Yeah, everybody was just scared. They were cold. We all  
6 just ran off with none of jackets on and keys. I didn't even have  
7 keys to -- I thought about unlocking the other boat to have them  
8 sit on there. I didn't have any of my boat keys. I just happened  
9 to have my phone, and I was just -- I had Jeremy just kind of  
10 keeping everyone calm while my supervisor and our GM and other  
11 people were calling me, just trying to figure out what was going  
12 on and making arrangements to get there and figure out what we  
13 were going to do with the staff.

14 Q. Did you have any discussions with any of your staff about  
15 what was going on?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Did you witness any flames, fire, smoke when you were  
18 standing on the street level or at the pier?

19 A. Yes, we saw smoke.

20 Q. Can you kind of describe that? What did the smoke look like?  
21 Where was it coming from?

22 A. It was black. It was one of -- the back window in that wait  
23 station where it started in ended up cracking before the fire  
24 department got there. So that was where we first saw the smoke  
25 coming out of the boat. And then it wasn't until the fire

1 department got there and started breaking windows and you could  
2 see the smoke more visibly coming out of the boat. It was just  
3 black smoke.

4 Q. Did you have any interactions or did you talk to the fire  
5 department at all?

6 A. I did.

7 Q. Can you kind of bring us through that conversation?

8 A. When they -- they didn't really ask anything. When they got  
9 there, they asked me what the safest way for them to get on the  
10 boat was. I brought them down the ramp into a cargo door in the  
11 front of the ship. I opened the door for them, and smoke  
12 immediately came pouring out of the boat and then they just ran  
13 on. That was the extent of it.

14 Q. So I'm just going to kind of move this to more training, more  
15 -- maybe not training, but information that the company has passed  
16 to you. Last summer, there was a fire on board a similar vessel.  
17 Has the company every reached out to your staff or employees to  
18 talk to you about that fire and kind of lessons learned or  
19 anything like that?

20 A. They informed us about the fire.

21 Q. Did they kind of give any -- how did they -- what did that  
22 look like?

23 A. It was just an email that was sent to us just telling us that  
24 there was a fire on one of our vessels in another city. It was  
25 just sent to the management and people in the office --

1 Q. Was there any like does or don'ts or best practices regarding  
2 that?

3 A. (No audible response.)

4 Q. Okay.

5 MR. FAWCETT: Did you, did you shake your head no?

6 MS. GRIFFIN: Yeah.

7 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. For the record --

8 MS. GRIFFIN: I'm sorry.

9 MR. FAWCETT: -- you said no. Thank you.

10 LCDR ██████████ Thank you. That's all my questions. I'm going  
11 to pass it to my colleague, Mr. Fawcett.

12 MR. FAWCETT: Sure.

13 BY MR. FAWCETT:

14 Q. So, my name is Keith Fawcett, and thanks again. The company  
15 has an emergency response plan, and Mr. Denley was talking about  
16 you had answered the question, but I just want to -- so you're  
17 aware there's an emergency response plan that explains what the  
18 restaurant manager's duties are, and you're not aware of that plan  
19 or those duties?

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Okay. So, who trains the wait staff about anything related  
22 to safety? In other words, we know about the marine crew, the  
23 captain and so forth, but who trains the wait staff, the people  
24 that work with you and for you about safety of operations on the  
25 vessel?

1 A. The marine crew.

2 Q. And how do they do that?

3 A. They usually just do like training with all of the staff  
4 before they start. Like when someone gets hired, they go through  
5 that training before they start working on board. The last time I  
6 sat in on one of those, it was a PowerPoint presentation and for  
7 the most part, they did a walk through to show where fire  
8 extinguishers were, to show where all of the lifejackets are on  
9 the vessels, how to put on a lifejacket.

10 Q. And is that different -- there's a -- and you've been with  
11 the company for 6 years. So there's a new hire orientation  
12 program. Is that different? In other words, do the vessel marine  
13 crew put on a different training than the new hire orientation?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And how do you know that your new hires that start working  
16 have completed that training? Does somebody tell you they've  
17 completed the onboard training?

18 A. (No audible response.)

19 Q. Yes.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And what do they tell you -- what does the marine crew tell  
22 you in the event of a fire that you witness what you should do?

23 A. They don't.

24 Q. They don't tell you.

25 A. No.

1 Q. And who evaluates the performance of the -- I don't know what  
2 the proper term is, the hospitality crew. Is that okay to call  
3 everybody?

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Who evaluates their performance? If I was a, if I was a  
6 server or server assistant or a cook, who determines whether I'm  
7 doing my job correctly?

8 MR. DENLEY: Just to clarify the question, you're referring  
9 to whether they're doing their job as a server correctly?

10 MR. FAWCETT: Yeah.

11 BY MR. FAWCETT:

12 Q. In other words, who -- is there a process where you sit down  
13 with me as a server once a year and say, you're doing a good job,  
14 you know, you need to better on this or that?

15 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Relevance. Go ahead.

16 BY MR. FAWCETT:

17 Q. Well, I'm talking about a good job would entail, for example,  
18 perhaps what you do in the event of a fire. There is a  
19 responsibility to do something, isn't there?

20 MR. DENLEY: Objection. She's -- you've already asked the  
21 question. She's already answered it.

22 MR. FAWCETT: Okay.

23 BY MR. FAWCETT:

24 Q. So there is no responsibility in a fire, correct?

25 A. Not that I'm aware of.

1 Q. Okay. And then the marine crew's off the vessel. Who's in  
2 charge of the vessel as a representative of the company when the  
3 marine crew's not aboard from your perspective?

4 A. The manager.

5 Q. And you were the senior manager?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. So there was a high school party, and they were on the second  
8 and third deck I believe.

9 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Relevance.

10 BY MR. FAWCETT:

11 Q. Well, do they have table candles on their tables?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Why wouldn't you put table candles on those tables?

14 A. We usually don't put anything on the tables for student  
15 groups just because they run around and make a mess. They usually  
16 rip the tablecloths off the tables.

17 Q. And is there any -- have you ever given guidance to anybody  
18 that works with you or for you about what to do? Now, we're  
19 saying you have a candle that has a glass globe. It's filled with  
20 paraffin was.

21 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Calls for speculation.

22 BY MR. FAWCETT:

23 Q. Okay. The candles have a flame. Is that correct?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And you light the candle and at the end of the time you're

1 done with the candle, you either -- tell me if I'm wrong, but you  
2 either store it because it has, you know --

3 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Asked and answered. She already  
4 explained the process that they go through when they clean up.

5 BY MR. FAWCETT:

6 Q. And what do you do with the candles that have no fluid in  
7 them?

8 A. The votive itself?

9 Q. Yeah, the votive itself.

10 A. They get stored away if they're not going to use them any  
11 more.

12 Q. Okay. They don't get thrown away?

13 A. The glass votives, no. They keep those.

14 Q. Okay. And you refill them. Is that correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. So have you witnessed personally if I -- if the  
17 reservoir of fluid in the candle is empty and you blow out the  
18 flame, have you witnessed the wicks smoldering, you know, the  
19 black wick? Does it have sort of a red ember on it because you've  
20 blown the flame out?

21 A. No.

22 MR. FAWCETT: So, with your permission, Mr. Denley. I'm  
23 going to stand over there.

24 BY MR. FAWCETT:

25 Q. I just want to ask you a question. I'm a visual person, and

1 if we ask you to do a diagram, it's only one dimension. And if we  
2 could take you to the vessel, and I need to understand for my  
3 part, you mentioned sparks and so forth. So, this is not, this is  
4 not the trash can. The trash can is like this high that was in  
5 the wait area. So if you could stand up for a minute. If this is  
6 the hall that runs from the bow to the stern, fore and aft, and  
7 you're standing here and there's the wait staff, where would that  
8 trash can be? Would it be in -- like over here somewhere?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Can you put it where it would be?

11 A. If this was the --

12 Q. Yeah, this is the back wall.

13 A. Where the fire started.

14 Q. Yes.

15 A. The trash can --

16 Q. So to help me understand, because I was on the boat  
17 yesterday, and there is no trash can. There's just residue of a  
18 trash can.

19 A. Um-hum.

20 Q. But could you show me where you saw the sparks if this were  
21 the wall going up to the ceiling?

22 A. They started kind of in the middle of the wall right here.  
23 So we have glass racks that I mentioned that are probably about  
24 this high.

25 Q. And by glass racks, do you mean where you store glass?



1 A. Yes. So there's racks that each fit 25 glasses. We store  
2 about five or six racks on top of each other, stack them --

3 Q. All right.

4 A. -- about this high. They're about an inch away from the wall  
5 right here on a rolling cart. The sparks were coming from behind  
6 the racks, in between the racks and the wall.

7 Q. Okay. Stand over here with me just because this is where you  
8 were, right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You're looking in there --

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. -- and if this were the ceiling or the overhead of the  
13 vessel, did you see smoke up there?

14 A. The smoke I saw coming from the ceiling area, yes.

15 Q. So back where the sparks -- like what color were they?

16 A. Orange.

17 Q. Okay. So were there any like silver -- you know, you've had  
18 sparkler, right? You've seen it at the 4th of July.

19 A. They were just orange.

20 Q. Okay. So they were orange. Were they spitting?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And how far out did they come?

23 A. They were coming out from the racks. So.

24 Q. This way?

25 A. They were going in all directions.

1 Q. Okay. So the sparks are spitting out in to the space, and  
2 how far -- if I was standing here, would I get hit by sparks?

3 A. You could.

4 Q. So any time did you see that trash can on fire? It's this  
5 tall.

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Now, once again, visual guy. So, the fire is  
8 spreading.

9 A. Um-hum. Yes.

10 Q. Where did I see the spreading fire?

11 A. On the floor, underneath the racks, it was coming this way.

12 Q. Okay. Thank you. You really helped me because I saw, you  
13 know, I saw the space. Now, I can put together. So, you have  
14 fire spreading. Have you ever seen like liquid on fire spreading?

15 A. (No audible response.)

16 Q. Okay. Was it, was it kind of moving in a pattern, like it  
17 was a liquid moving this way and flames were on top of it?

18 A. I just saw flames.

19 Q. Okay. Were they shooting out the side?

20 A. Yes, they were coming this way.

21 Q. Did you see any fire or flames coming out this way?

22 A. Not that I remember.

23 Q. Okay. So we're standing here. Where's Sharon standing?

24 A. She's right next to me.

25 Q. And that's Ms. Bell?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. So she's there.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. And then where was the fire extinguisher?

5 A. The fire extinguisher was on the other side of the deck.

6 Q. How far? Over by that flag?

7 A. It was further than that.

8 Q. Oh, further. Okay. So when I was on the vessel yesterday,  
9 there was a fire extinguisher over there. Did you ever see that?

10 A. No, I never went into the pantry.

11 Q. Was there any smoke over there?

12 A. No.

13 Q. And was that the food prep area, over here?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Do you know what -- and you've been in there, right?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. Do you know anything over here -- like if I was in the food  
18 prep area, do you know anything, like equipment over here that  
19 might cause sparks?

20 A. There's a TV box, it looks very similar to that box right  
21 there.

22 Q. Like this?

23 A. Um-hum.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you describe it for us, Keith?

25 MR. FAWCETT: Yeah, there's a large, there's a large

1 electronic cabinet that's over against the wall that she's  
2 indicating would have been on the other side of the wall.

3 BY MR. FAWCETT:

4 Q. All right. So you tell Sharon to go?

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. And you follow her up?

7 A. I didn't follow her right away. I just stayed there, and I  
8 told her to go first because she has a hard time going up and down  
9 stairs, and it was going to take her a minute. And then Jeremy --  
10 the people upstairs (indiscernible).

11 Q. Do you know like from where we're standing right here, where  
12 the closest general alarm box is that you could send a general  
13 alarm for the -- it's a fire alarm. Do you where it is?

14 A. (Indiscernible).

15 Q. Do you know if I was standing here or if we went to the boat,  
16 where the fire blanket would be stored?

17 A. (Indiscernible).

18 Q. So that all I have. Thanks very much. So I have just a  
19 couple of follow-up questions. There is a cell phone video that I  
20 saw that kind of look down into the fire area, and someone was  
21 commenting about get my stuff or something. Did you take that?

22 A. I did not.

23 Q. Okay. If I work for you, and I had safety concerns --

24 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Calls for speculation.

25 BY MR. FAWCETT:

1 Q. Okay. There hasn't been a question yet. Can an employee  
2 that works for you, if they weren't satisfied and they had a  
3 safety concern, and you didn't address it, who would they go to  
4 within the company to have their safety concerns addressed?

5 A. Probably my supervisor.

6 Q. And who's that?

7 A. Thatcher Trombly, he's our food and beverage director.

8 Q. And that's at the Boston area?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What was his last name?

11 MS. GRIFFIN: Trombly.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Trombly, okay. Thank you.

13 BY MR. FAWCETT:

14 Q. So I know that Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] asked you a  
15 question about the *Spirit of Norfolk* fire on June 7th, and you  
16 mentioned a company email. Did it -- could you elaborate a little  
17 more --

18 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Relevance.

19 BY MR. FAWCETT:

20 Q. Did the email that you received just --

21 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Relevance. It has nothing to do  
22 with this investigation.

23 MR. FAWCETT: Sir, I will say that I'll ask the question.

24 BY MR. FAWCETT:

25 Q. Did the, did -- the email simply said there's a fire on the

1 *Spirit of Norfolk*, end of story. Or did it ask you to be as  
2 employees more vigilant related to fire safety or did it have any  
3 instructions for you that would be more directed towards fire  
4 prevention within the company?

5 MR. DENLEY: Objection. The same objection about relevance.  
6 She's testified several times what her role and responsibilities  
7 are in the company.

8 MR. FAWCETT: I'm trying to determine if that email simply  
9 said there was a fire aboard the *Spirit of Norfolk*. That's it.

10 MR. DENLEY: And I sustain my objection.

11 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. We'll add that to the subpoena. Thank  
12 you. Thank you very much. That's all I have. Thank you.

13 Mr. Young.

14 BY MR. YOUNG:

15 Q. Do you need a break?

16 A. I'm okay.

17 Q. You're okay. Great. So Mr. Fawcett had kind of done a  
18 little bit of a walkthrough of the space and we had been aboard  
19 the vessel after the incident last week. And the more you can  
20 help us understand how that room was set up would really kind of  
21 help us understand maybe what happened. When we went there, it  
22 looked like there was a gray rolling cart that might have been  
23 maybe almost where the garbage pail was. Does that ring a bell?  
24 Like do you think that rolling cart is typically stored right  
25 there?

1 A. Yeah. Well, we have -- is it like a flat rolling cart?

2 Q. Yeah.

3 A. We use rolling carts for the glass racks that were stored in  
4 that wait station.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. They're stored on top of a rolling cart.

7 Q. And the rolling car is like 8 inches high with wheels --

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. -- and it's tan colored, right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. But what we saw was a black cart that was almost two levels  
12 and maybe 3 feet high. And, it was right in that corner where the  
13 garbage pail is, and it had black trays of silverware.

14 A. A cart like -- oh, that -- I know the cart you're talking  
15 about. We have the -- the galley has like push carts --

16 Q. Um-hum.

17 A. -- that they let my staff use. If they have a lot of dishes  
18 and silverware that they need to transport --

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. -- from the kitchen to the wait station, they'll push them on  
21 that cart.

22 Q. Okay. So typically it would be dishes and forks and knives,  
23 that they're clearing the tables maybe and bringing them to the  
24 dishwasher?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Where is that black cart for dishes usually stored?

2 A. In the galley.

3 Q. Yeah. Okay. Because when we were there, we found it right  
4 in that corner.

5 A. It was in the wait station that night because they were  
6 cleaning silverware and dishes on it --

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. -- during the cruise.

9 Q. Okay. Is there like a bucket like to clean tables?

10 A. Yeah, they just use hot water.

11 Q. On the cart.

12 A. Yeah, they get a bucket with hot water.

13 Q. Okay. So then if we're working our way outboard, you'd have  
14 the black cart. That's kind of where we found it, and then next  
15 to it was we believe could have been the garbage pail. Further  
16 towards the window, is that where the rolling cart with stacks of  
17 glasses would be typically stored?

18 A. This is like the beginning of the wall of the wait station.  
19 Those racks are right there.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And then there's a shelf next to those racks. That's kind of  
22 up against the window area.

23 Q. And is that a metal shelf?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And it has those kind of adjustable heights? There's a green



1 one on the other side that had adjustable shelves as well that had  
2 forks and knives on it.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Just on the other side.

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And what is kept on the metal racks of the shelves by the  
7 window?

8 A. Our coffee pots, our extra coffee pots, just bags of coffee,  
9 coffee filters, all of our coffee supplies.

10 Q. Okay. Any machinery, any mixers, blenders, anything? Pretty  
11 much coffee supplies?

12 A. Um-hum.

13 Q. And then is there a shelf under the window?

14 A. There's not a shelf. It's just a window sill.

15 Q. Window sill. Is anything stored on that?

16 A. Sometimes people keep their stuff there, not -- it's not like  
17 the designated storage area for anything.

18 Q. Okay. And then continuing around, you have your window with  
19 the sill. And then you're coming around. Now you're looking  
20 forward on the portside. There's a sink.

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. And then there seemed to be a bit of a shelf on the forward  
23 bulkhead. What's kept on that shelf?

24 A. More coffee supplies and tea bags, our salt and pepper  
25 shakers for the tables.

1 Q. And then continuing back inboard, and then there was the  
2 coffee machine. So are any of the candles for the tables stored  
3 in that wait station?

4 A. On the other side.

5 Q. What do you mean the other side?

6 A. So where there's that -- you saw the rack that had all the  
7 silverware on it --

8 Q. Um-hum.

9 A. -- and then next to that is another rack that has like the  
10 Peela (ph.) system. That shelf, that bottom shelf is where the  
11 candles are stored.

12 Q. Okay. And that's further inboard away from the window --

13 A. Yeah.

14 Q. -- towards the center of the vessel.

15 A. The opposite side, yeah.

16 Q. Okay. And how about any Sterno cans? Are they stored in the  
17 wait station?

18 A. Sometimes.

19 Q. And is there a spot that they put them sometimes?

20 A. They'll either put them on the shelf or in the window sill in  
21 boxes.

22 Q. And would they be brand new ones or ones that had been used?

23 A. Right, new ones.

24 Q. And where the used ones were from the galley. Okay. Can  
25 passengers see into that space or is there a curtain or anything

1 between --

2 A. They can see like just the front area, that immediate wall  
3 right here.

4 Q. And as a passenger, what would they see on the night that the  
5 fire happened if I looked directly and what do you think the first  
6 they'd see?

7 A. Probably a yellow linen bin or that black cart I think was in  
8 there with all the dishes that they were detailing.

9 Q. Okay. Do you ever see passengers going in there to say bring  
10 in a coffee cup or throw something away or are they --

11 A. I have seen that, yes.

12 Q. Did you see anyone that night go in?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Nobody. That night that the fire happened, were there any  
15 passengers on that same deck?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. It was a high school party, right?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Was it just various people or was it a group?

20 A. It was various people.

21 Q. Okay. And were there any problems with any of those  
22 passengers? Did you have any issues security-wise or anyone out  
23 of hand?

24 A. No.

25 Q. And were you fully staffed with your crew that night or were

1 you short staffed?

2 A. We were a little short staffed.

3 Q. What do you mean by that?

4 A. We didn't have a hostess like I said. We normally would have  
5 had a least two of them on, maybe another like server assistant.

6 Q. Okay. And how do you determine when it's time to leave for  
7 the night? Does everyone leave at the same time or --

8 A. We all leave at the same time.

9 Q. And you all work together to kind of help each other get out  
10 at the same time?

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. And is it a set time every night that the cruise is ended at  
13 10, you're all done at midnight or does it depend how --

14 A. It depends on how long the cleaning process takes.

15 Q. And does that depend on how many passengers you had?

16 A. It depends how many passengers we had or what our reset is.

17 Q. For the next cruise.

18 A. Um-hum.

19 Q. Typically what time would you get out?

20 A. Usually an hour, hour and a half, when we go.

21 Q. And was that about going be on schedule for that night?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Nothing out of the ordinary?

24 A. No.

25 Q. When the vessel arrives alongside and all the passengers get

1 off, does the marine crew shut the engines down and they connect  
2 to shore power?

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. And in doing that, do they lose power temporarily and then  
5 restart once they're plugged back in?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. And once it's plugged back in, do the lights come back on?

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. How about the air conditioning or the blowers on the heat --  
10 that blows heat? Does that come on again?

11 A. (Indiscernible).

12 Q. Okay. Do you know in the wait area, if you look above the  
13 window, there's like a grating and there's air that comes out of  
14 it? It's called an air handling unit.

15 A. (Indiscernible)

16 Q. Do you know during the cruise if that was on? Can you feel  
17 anything?

18 A. I'm not sure.

19 Q. Okay. Do you know if the passengers are alerted or advised  
20 about the smoking policy on the boat?

21 A. There's a general safety announcement that the DJs play,  
22 that's a recorded announcement at the beginning of every cruise,  
23 and it states in that announce the *Spirit* is a non-smoking vessel.

24 Q. Okay. Did you see any passengers smoking on that level that  
25 night?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Do you ever?

3 A. No.

4 Q. That's good. Were there any issues with any of your staff  
5 that caused any disciplinary action? Did any of your staff get in  
6 trouble that night?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Okay. Did you get in trouble that night?

9 A. No.

10 Q. No, okay. Good. And was every deck being used that night by  
11 passengers?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And do you ever have cruises where an entire deck is not  
14 used?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. But for the most part, are all decks used or does it vary?

17 A. It varies.

18 Q. And then just -- Mr. Fawcett was asking questions about the  
19 ability to reuse the little table candles, and there might have  
20 been some confusion because you referred to it as a glass votive,  
21 and he was talking about the thing that goes inside it. So the  
22 glass votive is like a wine glass it looks like without a stem,  
23 right?

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. That gets reused all the time, right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. But you kind of place a liquid filled candle, if you will,  
3 inside it.

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. And we know they last for 6 or 8 hours.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. So at the end of a cruise, it gets blown out. If there's  
8 some liquid in, you can reuse it, right?

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. What if you blew it out and it was completely empty.

11 A. We would throw the filler away.

12 Q. Okay. And then you would get a new one for the next reset?

13 A. Yeah, it typically doesn't happen at night. That is the  
14 procedure, but they don't do it that night. They do it before a  
15 cruise. So they would have just put -- if it was empty, they  
16 don't check them at night. They just blow it out and either put  
17 the candle back on the table or store it away and then they'll  
18 check them the next day before the cruise starts, before the light  
19 candles, they'll make sure they're all filled.

20 Q. Okay. So you blow them out and leaves them there. The next  
21 morning on reset, they see it's empty. It would have sat all  
22 night on the table.

23 A. Um-hum.

24 Q. Okay. And, the last question I have is about the crew  
25 smoking. It appears that there might be an area on the aft deck

1 that the people do smoke.

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. And there were some signs we saw on the portside that says  
4 please don't throw your cigar butts on the ground.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. Do you know where you're supposed to throw your cigarette  
7 butts?

8 A. I don't know.

9 Q. Okay. Do you smoke?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate your spending the  
12 time to explain everything to us.

13 LT [REDACTED] Thank you, Mr. Young. Mr. Denley, do you have  
14 any questions?

15 MR. DENLEY: I do. Thank you.

16 BY MR. DENLEY:

17 Q. So I just want to be clear. You don't deal with Sterno at  
18 all.

19 A. That's correct.

20 Q. And the votives that were in use on the first deck the night  
21 of the cruise, what happened to them during your reset?

22 A. They were all brought upstairs to the second deck.

23 Q. Okay. So every single votive that was in use on the first  
24 deck was brought to the second deck?

25 A. Right.



1 Q. Before the fire?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And why?

4 A. We don't have enough votives for every table on that boat,  
5 and we need them for the reset on the second deck.

6 Q. Thank you.

7 MR. DENLEY: No further questions.

8 LT [REDACTED] Any follow ups?

9 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

10 Q. I just have one follow up question. I know we had talked  
11 about the general alarm before. At any point while you were on  
12 board or maybe at the pierside, did you hear any type of alarms or  
13 anything like that on the vessel?

14 A. I heard an alarm going off after we got off.

15 Q. Coming from the vessel?

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. Have you heard that alarm before?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Can you kind of describe what it -- was it like what you  
20 would think of a fire -- like a smoke alarm or like what did the  
21 alarm --

22 A. Yeah, it just sounded like a loud fire alarm.

23 Q. Okay.

24 MR. FAWCETT: Mr. Fawcett -- just a couple of clarifications.

25 BY MR. FAWCETT:

1 Q. So, each cruise, you get a plan for like the seating  
2 arrangement. Is that correct?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. So, when Mr. Denley asked you about bringing the votive  
5 candle fillers to the second deck, that was because the cruise the  
6 next day would have a plan that dining would take place and you're  
7 going to put those there. Is that correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And then you mentioned a procedure about what you do with  
10 those filler candles. Is that a written or verbal procedure? In  
11 other words, by taking them out and just setting them on the table  
12 for the crew the next day to deal with, is that a written  
13 procedure?

14 A. Verbal.

15 Q. It's verbal?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And then the seating plan that I mentioned, for the cruise on  
18 that particular day, do you recall if the seating plan diagram,  
19 what would I see if I was looking at it? If I was looking at a  
20 seating plan for the accident day evening's cruise, what would I  
21 see on it?

22 A. It just shows the tables, like our floor plan. It just shows  
23 all the tables on the deck, the table numbers and the name of the  
24 person sitting there.

25 Q. Does it have any area that you recall that's marked about

1 escape hatch for the engine room, please keep clear?

2 A. Um-hum.

3 Q. It has it on the diagram?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. That's all I have. Thank you.

6 LT [REDACTED] Mr. Young.

7 BY MR. YOUNG:

8 Q. I keep thinking about this room that the fire was in, and are  
9 you familiar with the area behind it? Do you ever go into that?  
10 What do they call that?

11 A. The pantry.

12 Q. The pantry?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. What would be on the opposite side? I know in that corner we  
15 talked about the black box for the audiovisual equipment.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. What would be just behind that bulkhead?

18 A. There's some shelving, various dry foods stored on it in  
19 containers, and there's like a warmer that they keep food in, in  
20 the other corner.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. Up against the wall.

23 Q. There's a big mixer, too, right? A big mixer, like a stand  
24 mixer?

25 A. Yeah, that's not like its permanent spot.

1 Q. Oh.

2 A. It might have been there at that time. That's movable.

3 Q. And then on that big shelf where food is stored, are there  
4 any pieces of equipment such as heaters or mixers or anything like  
5 that?

6 A. I don't think so.

7 Q. No. Do you know, and this is a hard thing to remember, on  
8 that wheeling cart that had the trays of glasses, how high it was  
9 stacked?

10 A. It goes pretty high. It's like basically at the top of that  
11 wall.

12 Q. Really.

13 A. The last rack.

14 Q. And then the racks of the glasses are kept in -- they're all  
15 different colors, right? There's red, blue, tan, and were they  
16 all in use?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. And are those clean glasses or dirty?

19 A. Those are clean.

20 Q. They're clean. So they've already come out of the  
21 dishwasher?

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. And they're ready.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And can you think of anything else that might have been on

1 that metal rack other than coffee filters and coffee beans and --

2 A. There's some pitchers, water pitchers.

3 Q. Like silver ones or plastic?

4 A. Both probably. We use both. That's all I can think of.

5 Q. Any coffee grinders or anything like that?

6 A. I don't think so.

7 Q. And did that rack go pretty high up towards the ceiling as  
8 well?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Because we did see the green one that was next to that  
11 bulkhead further on board. The racks are maybe, I don't know, a  
12 foot high between -- and they seemed to go almost as tall as me,  
13 about 6 feet?

14 A. Yeah, there was two racks that are the same height.

15 Q. Okay. The same type of construction.

16 A. They're the same. It's the same rack --

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. -- I believe.

19 Q. Okay. But pretty much that's dedicated for coffee equipment?

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. Up against the window?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And did you hear any other windows break other than  
24 that one in that --

25 A. That was the only one.

1 Q. -- wait room? That was the only one?

2 A. That's all.

3 Q. Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

4 A. Yeah.

5 BY MR. FAWCETT:

6 Q. I just have one more. Just to -- this is Mr. Fawcett again.  
7 So the trash can, the waist high trash can, it has a liner in it,  
8 a black liner. Is that --

9 A. Um-hum.

10 Q. At any time when you were there, did you see that trash can  
11 even -- flames even close to that trash can?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 BY MR. YOUNG:

15 Q. I just have one to conclude. You had kind of given us a  
16 really good -- I'm trying to rebuild that area, and you were the  
17 last one to see that area. So it really helps us to set this up.  
18 If you could -- if you're looking aft in that area, can you go --  
19 can you describe to me from the far most internal portion of that  
20 bulkhead or of that wall right there, and then move your way out  
21 aft, exactly what you would -- what you -- what is normally stored  
22 there, and then what was there on the night of the 24th.

23 A. Like up against the wall?

24 Q. Exactly. If you're looking -- in your perspective that night  
25 when you departed --

1 A. Um-hum.

2 Q. -- what you saw there that night?

3 A. I saw the shelf that's normally there with all the coffee  
4 stuff stored on it.

5 Q. And where is that located?

6 A. Up against the window.

7 Q. Okay. So further aft. Okay. So we're on the front -- aft  
8 of the inside.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. It's up against the window. There's two --

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You said aft. Going outboard.

13 MR. YOUNG: Outboard, yes.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Outboard, not the inboard.

15 MR. YOUNG: Yep, yep.

16 MS. GRIFFIN: There's usually two rolling carts with water  
17 glasses stacked on them, and then a yellow bin for dirty linen.  
18 That's usually the last thing right there. There's usually not a  
19 trash can. I don't know if there was one in the wait station that  
20 night. It's usually on the other side of the wall into the pantry  
21 right here.

22 MR. YOUNG: Okay.

23 BY MR. FAWCETT:

24 Q. And would there be a reason for that trash can to be in that  
25 area that you would know of?

1 A. I mean it's not like weird. It's not uncommon to have a  
2 trash can in a wait station. Every other wait station on that  
3 boat has trash cans. We just -- it's a small wait station. So  
4 just to save area space, we try not to put a trash can in there  
5 because the galley is right there. So we just bring all the trash  
6 directly to galley.

7 Q. And if that yellow linens bin was not there, where would it  
8 be and why would it be in that location then? Where would it be  
9 normally?

10 A. It would have been up against the side.

11 Q. And if I was to say that it was back towards the galley  
12 area --

13 A. They have their own yellow bin.

14 Q. They have their own yellow bin?

15 A. Yeah.

16 Q. Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

17 LT [REDACTED] And that concludes the interview. Thank you  
18 again for your time. We greatly appreciate it. As I stated  
19 before, if there's anything you'd like to --

20 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

21

22

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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 Cassandra Griffin

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM022

PLACE: Boston, Massachusetts

DATE: April 4, 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.



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Kathryn A. Mirfin  
Transcriber