

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: EDDIE GARCEA, Sous Chef
City Cruises

Via Microsoft Teams

Thursday,
April 13, 2023

APPEARANCES:

BRIAN YOUNG, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Lead Investigator
United States Coast Guard

KEITH FAWCETT, Civilian Marine Accident Investigator
United States Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
United States Coast Guard

LCDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Legal Advisor
United States Coast Guard

ERIC DENLEY, Esq.
On behalf of City Cruises

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I N T E R V I E W

(2:10 p.m.)

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3 MR. FAWCETT: So Mr. Garcea, thank you very much for joining
4 us via telephone. Do you have any questions before we begin?

5 MR. GARCEA: Hello?

6 MR. FAWCETT: Yes, Mr. Garcea, do you have any questions
7 before we begin?

8 MR. GARCEA: No.

9 MR. FAWCETT: Okay. So make sure everybody silences their
10 cell phones and Mr. Garcea, you know, in your business, sometimes
11 you use acronyms like F&B, which is food and beverage, try to just
12 use regular language so we don't have to ask you what you mean.
13 And then if you would just acknowledge by saying yes, that the
14 Coast Guard is recording this interview for the purposes of
15 creating a transcript.

16 MR. GARCEA: Okay.

17 MR. FAWCETT: So this is a joint U.S. Coast Guard/NTSB
18 investigation. The Coast Guard is the lead federal agency and we
19 are conducting this interview under the applicable Coast Guard
20 regulations. Today is April 13th, 2023, the time is 2:10 p.m.
21 Eastern Standard Time. We're conducting an interview with
22 Mr. Eddie Garcea via Teams and he is calling in. We are
23 conducting this interview to examine the events surrounding the
24 fire aboard the excursion vessel *Spirit of Boston*, which occurred
25 on March 24th, 2023 in Boston Harbor. And what we're going to do,

1 Mr. Garcea, you know, it would be nice if we could see you, but
2 we're going to introduce the Coast Guard team and then we're going
3 to introduce the NTSB team, and then for your benefit, we're going
4 to spell our names.

5 So my name is Keith Fawcett, I am a civilian Coast Guard
6 accident investigator and I work with this district formal
7 investigation. My last name is spelled F-as in Frank-a-w-c-e-t-t.
8 Commander.

9 (Pause.)

10 CDR [REDACTED] Sorry about that. My name is Commander [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED] I'm the lead investigator for this investigation. Last
12 name is [REDACTED] and thank you for joining us today.

13 MR. GARCEA: Thank you.

14 LT [REDACTED] Good afternoon, Mr. Garcea, my name is Lieutenant
15 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is spelled [REDACTED] and I am also an
16 investigator for the First Coast Guard District. Thank you for
17 joining us.

18 MR. GARCEA: Thank you, as well.

19 MR. FAWCETT: Commander [REDACTED]

20 LCDR [REDACTED] Yeah, good afternoon, sir. My name is
21 Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] my name is spelled
22 [REDACTED], and I'm the legal advisor to the investigation.
23 Thanks for being on.

24 MR. GARCEA: Thank you.

25 MR. FAWCETT: And the NTSB.

1 MR. YOUNG: Good afternoon, Mr. Garcea, my name is Brian
2 Young, Y-o-u-n-g, and I'm an investigator for the National
3 Transportation Safety Board. Thank you for your help today and
4 joining in on this call.

5 MR. GARCEA: Thank you, as well.

6 MR. FAWCETT: Mr. Garcea, could you say your name and spell
7 your last name for the record?

8 MR. GARCEA: Yeah, my name is Eddie Garcea. My last name is
9 spelled G-r -- G-a-r-c-e-a.

10 MR. FAWCETT: And thank you.

11 And Counsel?

12 MR. DENLEY: Yeah, this is Eric Denley, D-e-n-l-e-y, counsel
13 for City Cruises.

14 MR. FAWCETT: Thank you, sir.

15 So Mr. Garcea, just so you are aware, we say that memory is
16 perishable, so if you remember anything differently than you say
17 today, if you want to add anything, if you want to change anything
18 you say today, please let Mr. Denley know and Mr. Denley will let
19 the Coast Guard and the NTSB know.

20 And then we're going to -- the purpose of this is to create a
21 report of investigation and to provide recommendations to prevent
22 a fire like this from occurring again. So if Mr. Denley or you
23 see the Coast Guard's report of investigation and you have new
24 information, let Mr. Denley know and he'll let the Coast Guard
25 know. And then Mr. Denley has access to a reference document

1 called the "Marine Safety Manual, Volume V," and you could Google
2 it, but Mr. Denley can point you to it. It explains why the Coast
3 Guard conducts these investigations and what we're trying to
4 accomplish in these investigations. So if you don't have any
5 questions, I'll turn it over to Lieutenant [REDACTED] and he will
6 ask you a bunch of questions about your experiences on the vessel.

7 MR. GARCEA: Okay.

8 MR. FAWCETT: Thank you.

9 INTERVIEW OF EDDIE GARCEA

10 BY LT [REDACTED]

11 Q. Good afternoon, Mr. Garcea. Thank you again for being here
12 with us today. I just want to ask you a few questions regarding
13 your background. How long have you been employed with City
14 Cruises?

15 A. Nine year plus.

16 Q. Nine years. And throughout the 9 years, what positions have
17 you held with the company?

18 A. I was a runner, I was a supervisor, now I'm a sous chef.

19 Q. And so when you say supervisor, was that galley supervisor or
20 restaurant supervisor?

21 A. Galley supervisor.

22 Q. Great, thank you. And you said that you are now currently
23 the sous chef?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. And how long have you held that position for?

1 A. For 1 year.

2 Q. For 1 year. Can you describe to me what your roles and
3 responsibilities are as the sous chef?

4 A. My responsibility, the schedule be done, the order be done
5 with the care (ph.), make sure everything on the vessel is working
6 right and like all -- we need to be checking out and make sure the
7 cruise is going, as well, and make sure the food is good and make
8 sure, like, in the galley room, everything how it supposed to be
9 run.

10 Q. Okay, thank you for that great description. Now, how do you
11 know that those are your responsibilities, is there a -- is there
12 a document or a sous chef procedure that you follow?

13 A. That what they told me what my responsibility when I take the
14 role as a sous chef.

15 Q. Okay. And so that's what they -- so was there another sous
16 chef who trained you on how to do what you're supposed to do?

17 A. Yeah, my chef teach me how to do this, yes.

18 Q. Okay. And do you work on all of the dining -- all four
19 dining vessels in the Boston area or just on the *Spirit of Boston*?

20 A. No, I'm from the *Odyssey of Boston*, so I was working over
21 there because the *Odyssey of Boston* was on the dry dock, so as
22 employee, they required me over there to help and then I used to
23 work over there like, I can say for a month, yes, until my boat's
24 back now.

25 Q. Okay, so you normally are employed on the *Odyssey of Boston*,

1 but for the previous month you've been working on the *Spirit of*
2 *Boston*, is that correct?

3 A. That's correct, sir.

4 Q. Okay. And are the vessels similar in the way that they're
5 operated with regards to the galley?

6 A. Yes, you can say they're almost the same. Yes, yes.

7 Q. Okay. And now is your position a position in which -- is it
8 an office position or are you -- you had stated that while the
9 cruise is going, you want to make sure everything goes well, so I
10 can assume that you're on board the vessel during the cruises, is
11 that correct?

12 A. That's correct, yes. Mostly on the cruise, yes. A few
13 cruises, I can be, like we call it jumping out before the cruise,
14 make sure everything is running good and one of the supervisor is
15 in charge and then I can jump before the cruise left.

16 Q. Okay. And who would that supervisor be? What is your -- in
17 the military we use the term like a chain of command, like who do
18 you report to and who reports to you?

19 A. It depends who's the supervisor on duty on that day. We got
20 so many supervisors, so it can be one of them. So I can tell you
21 a name? It's like it's hard because we got so many supervisors to
22 tell you like oh, it can be this person, can be that person, you
23 know, it can be who the supervisor's in charge, that I can talk
24 to, that supervisor, and make sure that he's good to run a cruise
25 and then I can bounce.

1 Q. Do you remember who the supervisor was on the 24th of March?

2 A. For that day for the *Spirit* accident?

3 Q. Yes, sir. Yes.

4 A. Yes, it was Thomas Swanson.

5 Q. Thank you. I want to go back further a little bit, so back
6 to when you were initially employed with City Cruises. Did you
7 take any, you know, any type of orientation or any training when
8 you were first hired by City Cruises?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And can you describe to me what that training was like?

11 A. Well, I was training, working aboard, I guess like working
12 aboard, the new employer (ph.), so they show us a video, like,
13 it's like it's a whole day, basically, 3, 4 hours that day or 5
14 hours, so they show us a video like how to engage with guests and
15 the respect of the company and like this stuff like basically
16 working aboard, the new employee.

17 Q. Okay. And I'm sure, I mean, obviously, there was a lot going
18 on on that day. Did any of that training include any type of
19 firefighting training or any type of emergency response training?

20 A. Yes, they do that, yes. They show you, like, on what vessel,
21 how many life jackets there are, where are the easy location and
22 stuff like that, you know, the marine crew, like, teach us.

23 Q. Was there ever a demonstration or did they show you how to
24 use a fire extinguisher?

25 A. On the video, yes, yes. There was some picture of the

1 demonstration how to suffocate a fire just in case happen, yeah.

2 Q. Okay. And so that happened when you initially joined the
3 company. Now, throughout your years working with City Cruises,
4 have you ever received -- have you ever received firefighting
5 training to -- such as how to extinguish a fire, how to extinguish
6 a fire using a fire extinguisher, or to use a fire blanket?

7 A. Yes, they (indiscernible) us, yes -- they taught us, like,
8 the marine crew, like when they're walking around, sometime they
9 ask these questions to us like you know how to use extinguish fire
10 and we told him yes, we pull it out, we take the safety, and we
11 point to the fire and then we press the -- I don't know how to say
12 that, like, you know the push button to release --

13 Q. Yeah.

14 A. -- what is inside on the extinguisher, you know?

15 Q. Okay. And how often -- when's the last time you received a
16 training like that?

17 A. Last year.

18 Q. Okay. And would you say that you receive it, you know, maybe
19 once a year, once every few years?

20 A. Yes, we -- yes, they speak to us like maybe -- not once a
21 year, maybe a few times a year. I don't know how many times I can
22 tell you because sometimes we are so busy there, you know, that we
23 forget stuff like, you know?

24 Q. Yeah.

25 A. Like how many times they tell us like, you know, they've got

1 this thing, the safety, the safety fire thing, you know?

2 Q. Um-hum. Have you ever participated in a fire drill?

3 A. No.

4 Q. No, okay. Have any of your employees or any of the people
5 who you supervise participated in a fire drill?

6 A. I don't know, I -- from the company, from like working over
7 here?

8 Q. Yeah, so -- and I don't -- yeah, I don't mean for you to
9 speculate, just if you know or if somebody said hey, I did a fire
10 drill or hey, they asked me to help and I'm going to help them.

11 A. I don't know, I can't tell you --

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. You know?

14 Q. Yeah, don't -- of course.

15 A. When they're outside, I don't know their life, their personal
16 life, and I don't be asking like, you know, like what you do in
17 your personal life, you know?

18 Q. Yeah, I understand. I understand. So it sounds like you
19 move between the *Odyssey* and the *Spirit of Boston*. When you got
20 to the *Spirit of Boston*, did anybody give you like a vessel
21 familiarization to where they showed you where the fire
22 extinguisher was or the where the egress rooms (ph.) were,
23 anything like that?

24 A. They do that, yes, they do that, yes. They tell us like,
25 like yesterday, they do some test like to see, like, what you

1 know, like what you know. Like, they ask you, like, make attempt
2 of hey, Eddie, do you know where the thing is, the fire
3 extinguisher they are on the galley, I say yes, right here, okay.
4 And then, you know, they asking like test like that, like to do
5 they know that we know there are extinguish fire near to us
6 available.

7 Q. Great, thank you. And that was a really good description of
8 what they do. When was the last time something like that happened
9 with you?

10 A. Last year, like I say, like --

11 Q. Okay, last year.

12 A. Right. Yeah, we started first of the year like, you know,
13 what happen, you know, everybody (indiscernible), you know, and
14 they -- they feel sorry for what happened on the *Spirit*, everybody
15 was --

16 Q. Yeah. No, I understand and I appreciate that, thank you.
17 And the people who conduct that training or who had conducted that
18 training, was that the marine crew, the captain and the marine
19 crew?

20 A. Yes. The marine crew. They showed me over here, no show me,
21 they were like, like, you know, they told me over here as well,
22 like on the *Odyssey*. I don't know the name of this liquid, like,
23 you know, just in case, you know, like my knowledge, like, you
24 know, what they told me, like, you know. Just in case a fire
25 happen in the galley --

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. -- it's like a push button, you release like a heavy
3 chemical, before I release that -- I have to -- everybody, make
4 sure everybody is out of the galley and before I do it, I have to
5 hold my breath and put it out and then get out from the galley
6 right away.

7 Q. And did you learn that from the marine crew or is that -- is
8 that information that you brought?

9 A. No, I learned that from my captain, yes. They told me like
10 just in case, like, you know? They always teach us like if
11 something happening, like, you know, they always like try to us
12 learning anything new, you know?

13 Q. Um-hum, okay. Have you ever, in either your working with
14 City Cruises aboard the vessels or in a previous work, have you
15 ever responded to a fire or attempted to extinguish a fire?

16 A. No, sir.

17 Q. Okay. So as being the sous chef, are you responsible for the
18 galley personnel?

19 A. Yes, sir.

20 Q. Okay. And as the sous chef, if there were to be a fire in
21 the galley, what would be your expectation of your crew, in the
22 galley?

23 A. In the galley, like I say, the first thing I would say is no
24 panic, right, don't get panic, we -- like to my employee, grab the
25 fire thing, right, just to make -- like I say, point to the fire,

1 here's the safety and release the liquid. If the fire is too big
2 and I cannot control it, right, so then I would call a marine crew
3 to deal with that. But on the time I suffocate the fire, I would
4 tell one of my people get a marine crew to control the situation
5 and take over the situation.

6 Q. Um-hum. And how would they -- how would they notify the
7 marine crew, is there a way that you would notify the marine crew,
8 that's pretty standard?

9 A. Yes, they always around on the floor, they're working around
10 on the floor, like checking, make sure everything's okay, they do
11 like a round, you know, like walk on the floor and they know who's
12 the pilot, how -- where they are.

13 Q. Now, when you got that training last year, was that while you
14 on board the *Odyssey* or the *Spirit of Boston*?

15 A. On board *Odyssey*. I always be on the *Odyssey*, so --

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. -- as I say, I was on the *Spirit* for the -- for 1 month
18 before, my boat wasn't here, it was in the dry dock, so --

19 Q. Yeah.

20 A. -- they need my help over there, so that's why I worked over
21 there.

22 Q. Understood. And now, since you -- you received this fire
23 training on the *Odyssey*, have you personally ever heard of the
24 same type of training happening on the *Spirit of Boston*?

25 A. I cannot speak about that, I don't know.

1 Q. Okay. Have you ever asked, over the past month, while you
2 were on the *Spirit of Boston*, have you ever asked any of your
3 employees about firefighting training or fire drills or fire
4 extinguishers?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. Okay. Okay, I want to shift a little bit to the actual -- to
7 the disposal of Sternos, right, so you guys use -- when do you --
8 how do you use Sternos and what are they used for?

9 A. They used for the chafing dishes, for the buffet.

10 Q. Okay. And I'm going to ask you, and please differentiate to
11 me that if the process is different on the *Odyssey* or if it's from
12 the *Spirit of Boston* to the *Odyssey* or if it's the same. So when
13 you're disposing of those, when they're complete and they're done
14 and they're burnt out, how do you dispose of those?

15 A. We dispose on the trash.

16 Q. Okay, so you put them in the trash. Is there something that
17 you do before you put them in the trash? How do you know that
18 they're extinguished?

19 A. Yes, we make sure, like I say, we take the Sterno half an
20 hour or an hour early before the boat dock on the -- right, on the
21 dock and they would clean the chafing, but the first thing we take
22 off the Sterno to get -- like the Sterno get cooled down, you
23 know, because you turn off, they're still hot, you know, but we
24 make sure the Sternos cool down and then we throw it on the trash,
25 like most -- like nothing came off from the Sterno, like no smoke,

1 like no hot, like, you know? And then we dispose the Sterno.

2 Q. You said you turn it off, how do you turn it off? And maybe
3 I misunderstood, but I believe you said you turn it off, how do
4 you turn it off?

5 A. Yeah. We turn it off with water, we put like -- you know, we
6 grab it and dump it on the water because the chafer, hot water.
7 So when we take out of the water in the container, we put it
8 inside of the -- in the water to get -- there's two different ways
9 that we turn it off.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. We turn it off in water and then we put it like -- like we
12 pick it out from the water and then it cools down, then into the
13 trash. The other way is to close it, like we suffocate the Sterno
14 until no oxygen go through and if there's no oxygen, there's no --
15 there's no way the fire is still on, you know?

16 Q. Yeah. No, I understand. Understood.

17 (Crosstalk)

18 MR. GARCEA: -- and then we let it cool down and then we
19 throw it on the trash.

20 BY MR. [REDACTED]

21 Q. Okay. And is this the same process on the *Odyssey* and the
22 *Spirit of Boston*?

23 A. Yes, that's how we -- we trained in the warning to do it like
24 that way.

25 Q. And that's the way that they did it on the night of the 24th?

1 A. I suggest yes, because that's the way they get training,
2 so --

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. -- they're always doing the same over there so, you know?

5 Q. Now, here's --

6 A. On the *Spirit of Boston* -- sorry. On the *Spirit of Boston* --

7 Q. No, no, you go ahead.

8 A. -- they're always do it -- on the *Spirit of Boston*, they're
9 always do it this way, so their knowledge, they know how to turn
10 off the Sterno because they always, always from the *Spirit*
11 (indiscernible) always the same, you know.

12 BY LT [REDACTED]

13 Q. So does the galley staff or the runners, as you say, now if
14 the restaurant was serving coffee and they had the coffee in the
15 -- in the server station, right, just forward of the cold prep, to
16 warm the coffee, who would dispose of that Sterno?

17 A. That's front of the house, the front of the house, the staff.
18 We don't work with coffee, we don't touch the machine coffee. We
19 don't do it with anything have do with coffee. Even if they put a
20 Sterno on the coffee thing, like I don't know what the name of the
21 coffee holder, using your Sterno over there, we -- we are not
22 responsible for that Sterno.

23 Q. Okay. Have you ever tried to blow out a Sterno?

24 A. A what, sir?

25 Q. Have you ever tried to like extinguish a Sterno by blowing it

1 out?

2 A. What do you mean by that, like blowing --

3 Q. I mean, like using your breath to blow, like if you were to
4 blow out a candle.

5 A. Oh, oh. Like with air?

6 Q. Yeah, yeah.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. You have tried to do that?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And were you successful?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay, all right.

13 A. I don't like to do, it's hard because, you know, you going to
14 have to blow like a few times like I did, I had to blow it like
15 five times to get it out. That's why it's hard doing it that way,
16 that's why we doing the last two ways, like I tell you, with water
17 or cover until no oxygen go through and then that's the way we
18 suffocate the Sterno, like to keep it on fire.

19 Q. Um-hum, okay. Do you know or are you aware if, on the 24th
20 of March, the galley staff disposed of the Sterno from the service
21 station where it was warming coffee?

22 A. I cannot -- I don't know about that.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. They can be -- they can be close to the -- close to -- you're
25 talking about the trash is close to the galley, to the galley,

1 right?

2 Q. No, no, I'm talking about -- so just aft of the dining area,
3 on the port side is like a service station where it has the coffee
4 and it has a linen bin and a trash bin, would that -- so where the
5 coffee maker and warmer is at is where the -- another Sterno was
6 being utilized by the restaurant staff.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And I'm asking do you know if any of your crew disposed of
9 that Sterno using the water and their method?

10 A. Using the -- can you -- sorry, it's hard to --

11 Q. No, it's okay. You explained to me the way that your galley
12 crew was trained to dispose of the Sternos, right, to put it in
13 water to extinguish it, to drown it and --

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Now, the question I'm asking is do you know if they took the
16 Sterno from that service station and disposed of it?

17 MR. DENLEY: Can you say who? Are you referring to the
18 front-of-the-house staff, Lieutenant [REDACTED]

19 LT [REDACTED] I am, Mr. Denley, yeah. I apologize, so --

20 MR. DENLEY: Okay, I think he already said that he's not
21 responsible for that, so I mean, Eddie, to the extent that you
22 know, go ahead and answer the question, but I think he's already
23 commented about that.

24 MR. GARCEA: Yeah, like I say, like I say, I'm not
25 responsible for the front-of-the-house management, the coffee or

1 whatever Sterno, anyway, like you know -- like I say, I don't tell
2 them what to do or what to (indiscernible), you know?

3 LT [REDACTED] Okay.

4 MR. GARCEA: So I'm not responsible. I'm responsible for the
5 galley staff, working issue this day, like what I know, my
6 knowledge, what my marine crew teach me and I can talk to my
7 staff.

8 BY LT [REDACTED]

9 Q. Great, thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Garcea, for
10 clarifying that. So I'd like to talk a little bit about the night
11 of March 24th aboard the *Spirit of Boston*. Were you on board that
12 night?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 Q. Okay. And if you can go ahead and walk me through your
15 shift, not necessarily from the beginning to the end, but more so
16 as you got towards cleanup and from going towards the end of the
17 shift, if you could start there and then to when you departed the
18 vessel.

19 A. Okay. So on the end of the shift, like you say, we clean up
20 and wrapping up everything and we have to throw away some food,
21 save it or give it to the staff, we do it, make sure everything
22 are clean, like, you know, the chafer are clean, no water, no
23 Sterno, nothing outside of the area. And then right when we dock,
24 we can check them out, every station, if they are good, we can
25 leave -- sorry -- we can leave and then get ready for the next

1 day.

2 Q. Okay. And when people are cleaning, what are you doing at
3 that time?

4 A. I'm walking around, make sure everything's okay.

5 Q. Okay. And then when they -- so the trash, who takes the
6 trash out?

7 A. We threw the trash out at the end of the night, we do it.

8 Q. Okay. And then when you're completed with your night, who do
9 you check out with?

10 A. That day, I got to speak about that day.

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. That day, I left early before the boat gets tied off, so I
13 leave early, you know, and then after that, my supervisor, they
14 were there, I don't know if they -- you know, like I said I know
15 Thomas was all right, he take the trash out, he made sure the
16 trash was out that day and then he left and then happened what
17 happened, like half an hour, like he left, happened the fire on
18 the *Spirit*.

19 Q. Um-hum, okay. And what is the smoking policy on the *Spirit*
20 of *Boston*?

21 A. The what, sir? The smoking?

22 Q. The smoking policy, yeah. Are passengers allowed to smoke on
23 board the vessel?

24 A. I don't think so. I don't think so. Or they might, but they
25 have to go outside. I don't think so. I don't know for sure.

1 Q. Okay. And what about crew members, are crew members allowed
2 to smoke on board the vessel?

3 A. They are smoke, they smoke on the back on the -- on the back.

4 Q. Okay. And do any of your galley staff smoke?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. They do. Do they smoke on the back deck, as well?

7 A. Yes, they are -- they smoke on the back.

8 Q. Okay. Do any of your -- do any of the staff smoke vape
9 cigarettes? Or vape pens, vape pens.

10 A. No, I think they smoke cigarette.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. They don't do vape, no.

13 Q. I'm sorry, Mr. Garcea, what did you call it?

14 A. They don't do vape, that the way you put it, the vape
15 cigarette, right? You said that, right?

16 Q. I said the vape, so like the electronic cigarettes.

17 A. Yeah, yeah. That's what, it's cigarettes.

18 Q. Oh, okay.

19 A. They don't do that.

20 Q. Okay. Have you ever seen anybody of the staff, to not
21 include just galley, but of the restaurant staff or marine crew
22 using a vape pen inside the ship?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. So you said you departed early from the vessel. When
25 did you find out about the fire on board the *Spirit of Boston*?

1 A. The next day. That's while my wake up news.

2 Q. You saw it on the news?

3 A. No, no, no, no. That was my wake-up news, the next day.

4 Q. Oh, your wake-up news, oh, okay.

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. And since the fire, have you talked to anybody on the
7 restaurant staff who was on board at the time of the fire?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. Was all of your staff -- was any of your staff still
10 on board when the fire happened?

11 A. No. Just, like I say, front of the house will leave early,
12 like I said early to you guys, we left early before that happen,
13 we leave like 30 minutes early that before happen.

14 Q. Okay. Just one last few questions here. So if the marine
15 crew is on board, who's responsible for your safety?

16 A. They are and also, I'm responsible. It's hard question,
17 that's a hard question, you know?

18 MR. DENLEY: Can you repeat the question, please, Lieutenant

19 [REDACTED]

20 LT [REDACTED] Yes, sir. If the marine crew is on board the
21 vessel with the rest of the crew to include galley staff and
22 restaurant staff, who is overall responsible for the safety of the
23 crew members and the personnel on board?

24 MR. DENLEY: Yeah, so when the marine crew's on board.

25 LT [REDACTED] Yes, sir.

1 MR. DENLEY: Got it.

2 MR. GARCEA: That means everybody, including guests --

3 LT [REDACTED] Say it again, Mr. Garcea.

4 MR. GARCEA: I say that mean including everybody, as well as
5 guests?

6 LT [REDACTED] Yes.

7 MR. GARCEA: Everybody, marine crews are responsible for our
8 life. We have to follow the direction that they give us, to us,
9 in case of an emergency. Yeah, they are responsible for our life.

10 BY LT [REDACTED]

11 Q. Okay, thank you. And have you ever been on board the vessel
12 working after hours when a marine crew is not on board?

13 A. After hour?

14 Q. Like --

15 A. What do you mean -- what do you mean?

16 Q. So once the vessel is moored and the marine crew has departed
17 the vessel and there's still like some -- the restaurant staff is
18 still on board, I just want to see, have you ever been in that
19 situation?

20 A. No, we are almost -- we are the first -- my team, the galley
21 team, is the first ones to leave the boat before the guests.

22 LT [REDACTED] Okay, great. Thank you very much for your time,
23 sir, that's all the questions I have. I'm going to pass it over
24 to Mr. Fawcett. Thank you again, Mr. Garcea.

25 MR. GARCEA: You're welcome.

1 BY MR. FAWCETT:

2 Q. Mr. Garcea, this is Keith Fawcett. Your answers have been
3 most helpful and I have some follow-up questions, okay?

4 A. Okay, thank you.

5 Q. So prior to 2020, were you working for Boston Harbor Cruises?

6 A. Two thousand twenty?

7 Q. Yeah, prior to that. In other words, there was a change in
8 ownership. Were you working for Boston Harbor Cruises?

9 A. I used to work for the (indiscernible) cruising, they were
10 passing to city cruising, you know, like you say, they been
11 passing to another, like to a new company, like you know, yes,
12 I've been always on the *Odyssey* from two thousand -- when I
13 started right here was in 2012, if I remember wrong, I was always
14 on the *Odyssey*, yes. Not from Boston Harbor cruising, you know, I
15 always been -- like, you know, like you said, they've been passing
16 by owner, like, you know, by -- how can you say that -- by --

17 MR. DENLEY: Yeah, maybe you can just -- I think you've
18 answered the question. Do you know anything about the ownership
19 of the *Odyssey* or the *Spirit of Boston*?

20 MR. GARCEA: The *Odyssey* or this -- of the both boat?

21 MR. DENLEY: Yeah.

22 MR. GARCEA: Like what you mean by that?

23 MR. DENLEY: I'm just trying to help. I'm just trying to
24 help clarify --

25 MR. FAWCETT: Yeah. Thank you.

1 MR. DENLEY: -- the question.

2 BY MR. FAWCETT:

3 Q. So I will state that in 2020, the ownership changed. So from
4 2020 do you -- are you aware of any changes in the safety policy
5 on the vessels you worked on?

6 A. I don't understand your question, sir.

7 Q. Okay, in the last -- in the last 2 years, two and a half
8 years, have there been any changes in the fire safety policy on
9 board any vessel you worked on?

10 A. No. Now I understand, no. They always like, they always
11 teach us like, you know, I don't know if that's the base (ph.) or
12 that, you know, they always -- you know, if they change the law, I
13 don't know, you know, because I don't -- I'm not part of marine
14 crew, you know, so --

15 Q. And then, just to give me an idea, just give me an
16 approximate number of days you worked aboard a vessel in 2022,
17 just an estimate is fine.

18 A. How many day I work in 2022?

19 Q. Yeah, just approximate on board one of the vessels.

20 A. Five times a week, five times a week, so --

21 Q. So you worked there on a regular basis, would I be fair to
22 say almost every day?

23 A. On summers was weekday. It's different, you know, because we
24 are on the boat, we are like a cruising, so on weekday, the
25 business is not too, too -- too busy, so we slow down, so on the

1 weekday we are slowed down.

2 Q. So based on your experience, when does the season start, you
3 know, in a normal year, what month?

4 A. It start -- it started like on this month, in this month,
5 April, May, like you know, like kind of like this month, but more,
6 more on May, it started like more getting more heavy, more busy.

7 Q. So when was the last time you got a -- you know, as you
8 described it, a safety presentation by one of the marine crew
9 members?

10 A. Last year.

11 Q. Can you give me a month, approximate?

12 A. I don't know. If I give you a month, you know, I don't
13 remember.

14 Q. All right, that's fine. Would you say at the beginning of
15 the season or in the middle of the season, would that be helpful?

16 MR. DENLEY: Object. He's asked -- you've asked it, he's
17 answered it, and he doesn't want to speculate.

18 LCDR [REDACTED] I think it's fair to look for an
19 approximation here. Mr. Fawcett, do you just want to ask the
20 question again?

21 BY MR. FAWCETT:

22 Q. Yes, Mr. Garcea, just -- would you know if you got the safety
23 presentation in the beginning of the season or in the middle of
24 the season or at the end of the season?

25 A. We have on the beginning, on the first in the season. Like I

1 say, they show us like on the year more than one time, you know?
2 And then, you know, it's hard to remember, you know, like I say
3 well, we are busy, like, you know, we are concentrating to get our
4 guests happy, satisfied, and get the cruise done, safety, and
5 ready for the next day. Sometimes, you know, we are trying to
6 remember very specific, you know?

7 Q. So when they give you the briefing, do they ask you to sign
8 like a sheet, you know, so that they can keep track of who got the
9 briefing?

10 A. What does that mean?

11 Q. Do you have to sign that you -- you know, do they have a
12 sign-in sheet where you -- like if you go to a company meeting,
13 they ask you to put your name on it so they can track that you
14 attended the meeting.

15 A. Oh, yes, yes. When they do the welcome on board, they make
16 you sign, yes.

17 Q. And is the welcome aboard -- I've seen a presentation called
18 "Learning the Ropes," it's like a PowerPoint, you know, they show
19 it up on a TV screen or on -- you know, on a big screen, is that
20 what you're used to, is that like --

21 A. Yes. Yeah, yeah, that's the welcome aboard presentation,
22 yes.

23 Q. And then --

24 A. They show you on the screen, you know, like I said early,
25 with picture, like just in case, how to use -- extinguish fire,

1 stuff like that.

2 Q. Yes, you explained that -- you explained that to the
3 lieutenant and I thank you for that. For the last -- when was,
4 just approximate, the last safety drill you were part of?

5 A. The last safety drill was on a -- was this year, like once
6 more, like -- how can I say it -- like, it wasn't like the safety
7 drill, was more talking about -- about -- about the boat, like you
8 know, the president come to over here, give you the thank you,
9 like, you know, like what we do and, you know, how we making
10 progress over here in Boston, like, you know?

11 Q. And when you say president, did you mean like somebody
12 actually came to the boat and talked to you?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. The president of what?

15 A. Of the company.

16 Q. You mean City Cruises?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. You don't remember his name, do you?

19 A. No, I'm sorry.

20 Q. Okay. So if you had a new galley person come to the vessel,
21 where would you tell that person to stow his personal gear, for
22 example, it was very cold the night of the fire, where would you
23 tell him to put his coat and any other personal stuff?

24 A. Like I say, sir, it's hard to take this question because
25 there are different -- like, the *Odyssey* and *Spirit*, the location.

1 I know the galley, it can be almost the same, but the location for
2 the storage are different. So for the storage for the *Spirit*,
3 it's like on the -- it's on the dry store, it's on the down, I
4 don't know what they call that, that is down on the bow and like,
5 you know, down stair, they have a locker right here.

6 Q. In the vicinity of the galley, are there any places to hang
7 up coats or jackets, like your own personal coats or jackets?

8 A. No.

9 Q. And take a moment to think about it. Where would I charge my
10 cell phone if I worked in the galley?

11 A. Where to charge -- oh. So --

12 MR. DENLEY: Objection, calls for speculation. I mean, you
13 can talk about what you did and what you're aware of, Eddie.

14 MR. FAWCETT: I'll rephrase, thank you.

15 MR. DENLEY: But don't feel like you need to speculate about
16 what other people might do.

17 BY MR. FAWCETT:

18 Q. Where would people on board, if you've seen it, charge their
19 cell phones or tablets?

20 A. They can get, I don't know, wireless for the charger and for
21 the phone. Which location in specific? Any part of the boat.
22 Why? Because you're looking for -- what's the name of this, like
23 to plug the charger, you're looking for one of the -- for one of
24 those first to get your phone charger, right? So after you find
25 out where you can plug your charger and plug your phone. Is any

1 location specific? No.

2 Q. Have you seen anyone charge a cell phone or other electronic
3 device in the galley area? And by that, I mean not out on the
4 dining room floor, but back, you know, where the wait station
5 starts.

6 A. No.

7 Q. And then where are the -- where is the galley walkie-talkie
8 charged?

9 A. The galley walkie-talkie, it's on the kitchen, on the thing,
10 on the kitchen. We call a line, it's over there, on the line,
11 like, you know, on the safety area, that has nothing to do with --
12 nothing to do with -- like I said, we have anything to do, it's a
13 safety area, it's located to be charged.

14 Q. And I don't know any -- I've been on the vessel and I
15 don't know --

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. -- where the safety area is in the galley, could you describe
18 that area?

19 A. You went to the *Spirit*?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. Do you know the *Spirit* kitchen?

22 Q. Yes.

23 A. Okay. If you walk to the kitchen, right, you're going to see
24 a prep table, right, right there, like, it's like double-side prep
25 table, right?

1 Q. Yeah.

2 A. You see on top it's like a little, like a little feet (ph.)
3 like on the middle?

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. On that area, it's nothing over there, that's why we put the
6 stuff over there, like you said, the radio, because it's not hot
7 over there, it's nothing -- it's nothing hot over there. It's not
8 like over here. My line is hot, you know? Over there, the line
9 is not hot.

10 Q. And in the safety area in the galley, is anything else
11 charged there, have you seen anything else?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. So there was a fire on another vessel, the *Spirit of Norfolk*,
14 in June of 2022. Did anyone from the company talk to you about
15 that fire?

16 A. No, that's too far away for me to be, notify to me. Even if
17 I work for the company, that's no -- it's not my responsibility to
18 know everything, what happen on the vessel.

19 Q. I'm just trying to see, any other -- since March 24th, have
20 you gone back to work on the *Odyssey*?

21 A. I'm on the *Odyssey* right now, yes.

22 Q. Since March 24th, the date of the fire on the *Spirit of*
23 *Boston*, have there been any changes communicated to you in any way
24 related to either fire safety, fire prevention, or firefighting
25 from the company?

1 A. Yes, they take care like, you know, make sure us, like, you
2 know, like they try to, to us know, like, be like careful,
3 basically we -- how I say it? They take some action, yeah, the
4 company take some action, they take out the candle birthday.
5 Hello?

6 Q. I understand they've taken out the open-flame candle.

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Did they send you an e-mail, for example, talking about fire
9 safety or fire prevention?

10 A. The fire safety, fire prevention?

11 Q. Yeah.

12 MR. DENLEY: What do you mean by -- what do you mean by fire
13 safety or fire prevention? Mr. Fawcett, maybe you could be a
14 little bit more specific with your question.

15 BY MR. FAWCETT:

16 Q. Did they send you an e-mail that talked about how, on board a
17 vessel, you could prevent a fire or what to do if there was a
18 fire?

19 A. Never I see that on that e-mail, you know, having check that
20 date, my e-mail, because I be so busy, like, you know -- sorry,
21 when the boat came back, to clean up, to get everything ready, you
22 know, we have a new menu and be ready for the new menu, then the
23 new menu. So, you know, how much -- a little bit to my computer
24 and be more on the physical, like on the boat, like my thing, to
25 organize the boat, to be set for running for this year.

1 MR. FAWCETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Garcea. I'm going to
2 turn it over to Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and see if he has any
3 questions and then we'll move to the National Transportation
4 Safety Board and we'll follow it up with Mr. Denley. So thanks
5 again.

6 Commander [REDACTED]

7 MR. GARCEA: Thank you.

8 CDR [REDACTED] Hi, this is Commander [REDACTED] I don't actually
9 have any further questions. I'll pass this time off to Mr. Young,
10 thank you.

11 MR. GARCEA: Thank you.

12 BY MR. YOUNG:

13 Q. Thank you, Mr. Garcea, this is Brian Young at the NTSB.
14 Appreciate you helping us out today. I just would like to ask one
15 clarification question. Mr. Fawcett was talking about candles on
16 the tables and I think I understood it, that birthday candles were
17 not to be used, is that correct?

18 A. Like I said early, that front-of-the-house stuff. I'm sorry,
19 I don't know --

20 (Audio feedback.)

21 MR. GARCEA: So I don't know.

22 BY MR. YOUNG:

23 Q. Understood. Had you received or seen any information from
24 the company regarding the use of candles recently?

25 A. They try to us like to keep the Sterno out, yes, like out the

1 vessel where we meeting (ph.), bring it to the vessel, yes.

2 Q. And was that communicated to you this week or, I guess --

3 A. Question, if that -- can anybody tell me what's the cause of
4 the fire on *Spirit*?

5 (Pause.)

6 MR. FAWCETT: We cannot answer that --

7 MR. GARCEA: Hello?

8 MR. FAWCETT: -- question. This is an active investigation,
9 sir, and we cannot --

10 MR. GARCEA: Okay.

11 MR. FAWCETT: -- answer that question.

12 MR. GARCEA: It's okay, it's okay. Just, you know, to see if
13 anybody can give me, like -- like, you know, about the fire
14 because they -- what I -- that question, I think it's like, you
15 know, they try to blame on the Sterno, that's my guess, like, you
16 know, all the questions you guys ask me, you only ask me about
17 Sterno, Sterno, Sterno.

18 MR. FAWCETT: Okay, sir, thank you.

19 Mr. Young, continue, please.

20 BY MR. YOUNG:

21 Q. Yes, I was not asking about the Sterno, I was specifically
22 asking about the candles on the tables and I think you answered
23 that the galley does not -- is not involved with those, is that
24 correct?

25 A. Yeah, we are not involved with anything with front-of-the-

1 house equipment.

2 Q. Okay, thank you. And the other follow-up question regarding
3 charging, I think I -- charging cell phones. I think I heard you
4 say you've never seen anybody charging anything in the pantry or
5 the wait station, but how about the galley itself, is that a place
6 where people charge, that you have seen people charging phones?

7 A. The radio, like charging the radio for communication for
8 marine crew and front-of-the-house manager and galley manager.

9 MR. YOUNG: Understood. Thank you for very much, I'm all
10 set. Thank you for your help today, sir.

11 MR. GARCEA: Thank you. Thank you.

12 MR. DENLEY: Mr. Denley, follow up, sir?

13 MR. DENLEY: Yes, I do.

14 BY MR. DENLEY:

15 Q. I just have a couple, a couple questions for you, Mr. Garcea.
16 Thanks again for your time. So I just wanted to ask you about --
17 on the cruise, on the cruise that happened before the fire, did
18 you -- was all of -- I guess, to the best of your knowledge, was
19 all of the equipment, all the galley equipment, working properly?

20 A. What do you mean by putting (ph.) properly?

21 Q. Was it working, was it working, were you having any problems
22 with any of the equipment in the galley?

23 A. The day before?

24 Q. No, the day --

25 A. I don't --

1 Q. The day of the --

2 A. The day?

3 Q. The day that the fire happened, yes.

4 A. Yes, all the equipment was working perfect, yes.

5 Q. Okay. And then I believe you -- I believe you already said
6 this, but I'll ask the question again, did you see anybody
7 charging anything in either the wait station or the cold prep area
8 during that cruise at all?

9 A. No, sir.

10 Q. Okay. And then I think you just -- you just commented about
11 essentially a policy change about Sternos and I want to just ask
12 the question because I want to repeat it because I thought that's
13 what I heard you say. Has the company asked you to, you know,
14 minimize or reduce the amount of Sterno that might be stored on
15 board, is that correct, is that what I heard you say?

16 A. They try to get like whatever can cause like a fire, I guess,
17 like, you know, they're trying to get it off the boat.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. And if you need it, if you need it, we'll bring it to the
20 boat, like, you know, because what happened, you know, they're
21 scared it maybe it can happen again and liquid can -- electrical
22 fire, you know, and they get a liquid, a liquid, a liquid
23 container, chemical container, so cool off the fire, you know.

24 Q. Um-hum. And how was that information passed to you?

25 A. Boss tell me that.

1 Q. And who's your boss?

2 A. Thatch.

3 Q. Thatcher Trombly?

4 A. Yes.

5 MR. DENLEY: Okay, great. Thanks. No further questions, I
6 appreciate your time.

7 MR. GARCEA: Thank you.

8 MR. FAWCETT: So this is Mr. Fawcett again. Mr. [REDACTED]

9 LT [REDACTED] I have no further questions, Mr. Fawcett.

10 Thank you very much, Mr. Garcea, for your time.

11 MR. GARCEA: Thank you, guys.

12 BY MR. FAWCETT:

13 Q. Thank you. This is Mr. Fawcett, just a couple of follow ups.
14 Take a moment and think about it, Mr. Thatcher Trombly told you
15 about the Sterno policy. What else did he tell you when he talked
16 to you about the new policy on board?

17 A. Nothing else, just that.

18 Q. And then a couple of follow-ups. The food warmer that's
19 located in the cold prep area, it's a silver vertical, you know,
20 locker with a couple handles on it, are you familiar with the food
21 warmer?

22 A. Yes. Yes, they never use that warmer over there. It's
23 always off.

24 Q. It's always off. And then --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- in the training that you got, "Learning the Ropes," do you
2 remember if they told you that if you have any issues with safety,
3 you have an e-mail address where you can send your concerns
4 directly to management of the company?

5 A. We can reach to our HR.

6 Q. But what about if it's a safety concern, can you send an
7 e-mail to an address that will go to upper management?

8 A. I never -- no, I never, like, you know, maybe they have that
9 e-mail but, like I say, we go to our boss and then we go to HR,
10 like, you know, if anything -- we can handle it over here, like,
11 you know, like talking, like -- but I can -- no, I never send
12 e-mail to this address, like you say, no.

13 Q. If there's an accident in the galley, is that called an
14 incident and do you have to do paperwork?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And then after the paperwork --

17 A. Not me, no. We call marine crew and marine crew do the
18 paperwork.

19 Q. And then does -- if there is an incident in the galley and
20 you fill out the paperwork or the marine crew fills out the
21 paperwork, does somebody other than the marine crew come aboard
22 and ask questions about the incident, for example --

23 A. Yes. Yes, they do. They came and ask question what
24 happened here.

25 Q. And who would come and ask questions about what happened, do

1 you know anybody that has done that?

2 A. The mate, the mate or the captain, if they got two captain,
3 like, you know, one of the captain come in or the mate.

4 Q. Oh, the mate, yeah. But I mean other than the marine crew,
5 has somebody from the people on shore, you know, I'll just call
6 them from the company, have they come aboard ever and just said,
7 like, what happened, other than the captain or the mate?

8 A. My boss, yes.

9 Q. Your boss, meaning Mr. Trombly?

10 A. It can be Mr. Trombly, yes, yes.

11 Q. Has it ever been, say, Mr. Harris?

12 A. No, sorry.

13 Q. Okay. That's Captain Thayer Harris, he's director of marine
14 operations.

15 A. Oh, Captain Harry. Okay, okay. Yeah, yeah, Harry, captain.
16 Captain, you say, or Harry?

17 Q. Yeah.

18 A. Which one? Sorry, what do you say?

19 Q. Harris, just like H-a-r-r-i-s.

20 MR. DENLEY: You might know him as Thayer.

21 MR. GARCEA: Thayer, yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes, Thayer, yes.

22 BY MR. FAWCETT:

23 Q. And there's another guy by the name of Rob Schuler (ph.),
24 Captain Rob Schuler, has he ever come aboard and like after
25 there's been an accident and talked to anybody in the galley?

1 A. Mostly Thayer because he come in, he's very familiar with a
2 crew member over here, like, you know, that's the face that we
3 always see, you know?

4 Q. Yeah. So it would be -- Captain Thayer would be the face you
5 would usually see, is that correct?

6 A. Can you say that again, sir? What?

7 Q. Yeah, it would usually be Captain Thayer, correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 MR. FAWCETT: That's all the questions I have. Any follow-
10 ups from anybody on the line?

11 (No response.)

12 MR. FAWCETT: None heard. Mr. Garcea, we appreciate your
13 time and calling in, and the time is 3:12 p.m. Eastern Standard
14 Time and we have completed the interview. We thank you very much.

15 MR. GARCEA: Thank you.

16 LT [REDACTED] Thank you, Mr. Garcea.

17 (Whereupon, at 3:12 p.m., the interview 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 Eddie Garcea

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA23FM022

PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: April 13, 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.



Karen D. Martini
Transcriber