

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: EDDIE MORALES, Server
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

██████████ ██████████ Commander
United States Coast Guard

ERIC DENLEY, Counsel
City Cruises

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I N T E R V I E W

(4:29 p.m.)

1
2
3 LT [REDACTED] -- this interview. It's a joint U.S. Coast
4 Guard/NTSB investigation. The Coast Guard is the lead agency, and
5 we're conducting this interview under the applicable Coast Guard
6 regulations.

7 It is April 4th, 2023. The time on deck is 1629, and we are
8 in the First Coast Guard District Legal Office.

9 I'm going to go around the room and ask the team to introduce
10 themselves.

11 LCDR [REDACTED] I'm Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm
12 with the District 1 Formal Investigation team, and my last name is
13 spelled [REDACTED].

14 MR. YOUNG: Good afternoon. My name is Brian Young. I'm
15 with the National Transportation Safety Board, and my last name is
16 spelled Y-o-u-n-g, for the record.

17 MR. FAWCETT: Thank you for being here. My name is Keith
18 Fawcett. I'm a civilian with the Coast Guard. I'm an interviewer
19 with this investigation team. And my last name is spelled F-a-w-
20 c-e-t-t.

21 LCDR [REDACTED] How's it going?

22 MR. MORALES: Good.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] I'm Lieutenant Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Last
24 name is [REDACTED], and I'm the legal advisor for the
25 investigation.

1 LT [REDACTED] My name is Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED],
2 and I'm with the First Coast Guard District investigations team.
3 And if you can go ahead and please introduce yourself, sir, and
4 spell your last name.

5 MR. MORALES: Eddie Morales. Last name is M-o-r-a-l-e-s.

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

7 MR. MORALES: Yes.

8 LT [REDACTED] And --

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

11 LT [REDACTED] Okay. Sir, I just want to make notification to
12 you that you may change, modify anything that you say in this
13 interview if you recall it at a later time. You may also appeal
14 the results of the report of investigation that will result from
15 this investigation. For information about the Coast Guard Marine
16 Casualty Investigation, you may look up Coast Guard or Marine
17 Safety Manual, Volume V, on the internet. It provides all the
18 guidance.

19 MR. DENLEY: Yeah, I just -- I know I mentioned to the
20 investigation team --

21 LT [REDACTED] Yeah.

22 MR. DENLEY: -- kind of some time constraints, and I was just
23 talking to Mr. Morales, and to the extent that we can try to
24 finish up in about an hour, at 1730. And obviously maybe we can
25 run over a little bit, but we kind of a hard stop.

1 LT [REDACTED] Okay. We'll do our best. Thank you.

2 MR. DENLEY: Yeah, thanks. Appreciate it.

3 LT [REDACTED] Thank you. Ms. [REDACTED]

4 INTERVIEW OF EDDIE MORALES

5 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

6 Q. Mr. Morales, again thank you for being here with us today.
7 How we're going to kind of do this is I'm going to go through some
8 background information, your employment, training, and then we'll
9 kind of get into the events --

10 A. Um-hum.

11 Q. -- of March 24th. How long have you been employed with
12 Hornblower Cruises and Events?

13 A. 25 years.

14 Q. And has that all been -- that entire time been on the *Spirit*
15 *of Boston*?

16 A. No. Actually it's been on the *Odyssey*, *Boston Elite*, *Seaport*
17 *Elite* and *Spirit of Boston*.

18 Q. And how long have you worked specifically on *Spirit of*
19 *Boston*?

20 A. This season I started.

21 Q. Okay. So when you say this season, like --

22 A. This will be my first shift. Like the coming season started.
23 So this is the shift that was available to work. So.

24 Q. So one shift only?

25 A. One shift only, yeah.

1 Q. -- on the *Spirit of Boston*. Okay. And what's your current
2 position on board the vessel?

3 A. Server/bartender.

4 Q. So what do those duties include?

5 A. Serving when clients come in, get them their food,
6 essentially. Provide customer service for them. Bartending, when
7 they want a drink, make drinks, you know, just getting them drunk.

8 Q. And do you currently -- do you work different decks or
9 specifically referring to March 24th, did you have a --

10 A. We work all over the place.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. It doesn't matter what deck it is. It all depends on what
13 the particular cruise intend. This particular cruise, you know,
14 if it's a different, if it's a wedding, if it's students,
15 depending on what it is, depending on how the senior servers is to
16 accommodate that particular situation.

17 Q. So for March 24th, you were all over, just accommodating
18 where you could?

19 A. I was on the first deck actually.

20 Q. First deck, okay.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. I know that looking back years, I know it's kind of difficult
23 to remember when you were hired on, your orientation. Do you
24 remember anything about the training you received when you first
25 got hired 25 years ago, what that looked like kind of?

1 A. Essentially just be customer friendly, make sure everybody's
2 good. In terms of any other training just basically what I was
3 hired for, I got trained on.

4 Q. Have you ever received any other -- in those 25 years, or
5 maybe even when you just got specifically like transferred to the
6 *Spirit of Boston*, did you receive any kind of training from the
7 company on anything regarding safety or what to do in the event of
8 an emergency, anything like that.

9 A. Every cruise, we have a safety announcement when they tell us
10 where all the lifejackets are, where the rings are, where the
11 emergency exits are. For the most part, that's pretty much what
12 we get in terms of training. So that's what we go with.

13 Q. So the safety announcement?

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. Was there anyone -- I know you said -- you mentioned in there
16 lifejackets. Did you anyone ever show you or like the wait staff
17 how to don lifejackets or --

18 A. No.

19 Q. -- how to use a fire extinguisher?

20 A. No.

21 Q. Have you ever participated in any of your other vessels as
22 well, that you've worked with Hornblower, have you ever
23 participated in any fire drills on board the vessel?

24 A. We've done a couple, yes. Just essentially what -- where to
25 push people forward, lead people a different way. Just the right

1 of ways where everybody should be going in case there's a fire on
2 the deck. That was a while back, probably about 10 years ago.

3 Q. Okay. That was the last one --

4 A. Um-hum.

5 Q. -- that you participated in personally?

6 A. That I participated in, yeah.

7 Q. And how was that run? Was that run like by the marine crew
8 or was that by a captain or --

9 A. It was run by a captain, yeah.

10 Q. Okay. And I know you specifically talked about drills. Do
11 you ever receive any training by the captain or the marine crew
12 about how to fight a fire on board the vessel?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Have you ever had to use a fire extinguisher outside the
15 vessel?

16 A. I have not, no.

17 Q. If you had to use one, would you know how to use one?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Have you ever been shown like how to use one.

20 A. I mean I've seen it on You Tube and stuff but, yeah, pull the
21 pin, press, point. They kind of say that.

22 Q. Okay. Are you familiar with any fire blankets on board the
23 vessel and where they're located?

24 A. I am not.

25 Q. Do your duties take you back into the galley area ever or do

1 you kind of just -- I know you said you do bartending and server.

2 Do you stay out --

3 A. They do. Essentially we have silverware in the back, extra
4 silverware, extra plates, glassware, and then the galley, where
5 you got to go and communicate with them and say, hey, where's our
6 food, where's there, where's that, where's desserts, this and
7 that. Yeah, we do have to go back and forth and travel on
8 multiple occasions.

9 Q. I know this was your first shift on this vessel, but were you
10 familiar with where the fire extinguishers were on that vessel or
11 does anyone point them out when you --

12 A. They did not, no.

13 Q. We're going to kind of move to March 24th --

14 A. Um-hum.

15 Q. -- 2023. If you could just -- we're going to have you just
16 kind of tell the story, paint the picture for us, in your words
17 just what you saw, what you smelled, what you witnessed, your
18 interactions with your coworkers. Just kind of start from the
19 time the vessel moored to pier after the cruise, and the
20 passengers departed.

21 A. Okay.

22 Q. Kind of start with that, and then just take us through when
23 you departed.

24 A. Okay. So essentially when we -- when everybody got off the
25 boat, we just started clear. We usually clear the whole entire

1 deck. So we prep it for the next day. We were getting flow plans
2 to work on. At that point, we had two servers and a server
3 assistant, and then they moved upstairs to help upstairs. And
4 then I moved upstairs because the first floor didn't need to reset
5 for the following cruise. So the second and third floor had to be
6 set for the dinner cruise. So we went upstairs. And for the most
7 part, we were just fixing the table, putting linen on the tables,
8 extending them, just resetting for the next cruise. And then we
9 started putting silverware on the tables.

10 So whereas when we get to silverware, we ended up -- I ended
11 up going down to the galley, getting the silverware tray and in
12 the process, I smelled plastic burning but I didn't think anything
13 of it because usually like the galley will leave some food for us,
14 and then the aluminum will burn in the warmer there. So I thought
15 it was that. So I didn't pay it any mind, and I went upstairs and
16 just put all the silverware on the tables.

17 Within, I don't know, maybe minutes of that, the manager
18 comes over and says everybody out. There's a fire. I'm like what
19 are you talking about? There's a fire. I said, okay. Everybody
20 out. Nobody could get their stuff. So everything -- they led us
21 off the deck. We got everybody out, and then they called 911.
22 They called all the managers, and then everybody joined the party
23 after that. So that was pretty much it. And then we spent 3
24 hours outside.

25 Q. All right. I'm just have some follow-up questions for you.

1 A. Sure.

2 Q. And we'll start like pre-fire.

3 A. Um-hum.

4 Q. Are there ever any special events on board on the vessel. I
5 know this was your first shift. So again, but typically on the
6 other vessels you've worked, have you ever seen special events?

7 A. In terms of like special events?

8 Q. Birthdays, anniversaries, parties.

9 A. Okay. So there was a high school on the second floor, second
10 and third floor there was a high school, and then first floor was
11 all individuals. So a lot of couples just come to have dinner,
12 and that's what we had because it dine out. It was our last day
13 for dine out because we participate in that every year. So that
14 was our last day and that. So everybody just came in. We had I'd
15 say about 100 people down there. I know I had about 18 tables.
16 So I took care of all of them, and then they all pretty much went
17 out. Yeah, so it was indies, individuals on the first floor,
18 second floor was high school, and third floor was the same high
19 school. So.

20 Q. What is dine out? What is that?

21 A. Dine out is an event that hosts, where all the restaurants go
22 and get half price lunches and dinners and it's restaurant week
23 essentially but they call dine out. But they have it in Boston
24 every year during the month of March and then the month of August.
25 They do it twice a year.

1 Q. Were there any on that first deck -- were there like any
2 birthdays or celebrations that anyone had?

3 A. I didn't have any birthdays on my particular section, but I
4 know I had a lot of people coming in and just having dine out, and
5 just, you know, enjoying their night.

6 Q. Did you notice that in any other sections?

7 A. Other sections, they might have had some, but I did not -- I
8 was more focused on mine, because once you get moving, you're just
9 on a roll and you're not going to pay attention to what everybody
10 else is doing. You just kind of focus on your section because
11 essentially you have to make sure they're happy, you know.

12 Q. Can you take us through kind of the clean up process once the
13 passengers departed? What does that look like and specifically to
14 the events of March 24th? Were you involved with clean up and
15 what did that involve?

16 A. The only thing that we do is we clean the glassware off the
17 tables, silverware off the tables, and take all the line off the
18 tables. We don't move anything until they tell us that there's a
19 flow plan for it. That particular day, there was none. My
20 section just got cleaned out. And then we put all the glasses in
21 the bar. All the silverware goes in the galley. The server
22 assistants take care of that, and then the dishwashers process
23 them and then we wipe them all down at the end. That's -- for
24 cleaning, that's pretty much it. At the end, maybe we'll do
25 vacuum or do a sweep up, but that's essentially what we, you know,

1 that's our job that we do.

2 Q. When you say flow plan, like can you kind of take us through
3 what a flow plan?

4 A. Sure. A flow plan, so, for example, this section right here,
5 how you have one, two, three, four tables. It could be like the
6 next cruise, we'll have that table altogether, there's all three
7 combined because there's some big group coming in. Essentially
8 it's just how to set up this up for the particular next cruise,
9 and how many people are going to come in and dine out and sit down
10 wherever they go, what group is going -- sections where you're
11 going to have the individuals come in and eat. So if you have a
12 party of 50, it goes here. If you have a party of 10, it goes
13 there. If you have 10 individual tables, then you have 10
14 individual tables that way. It's a flow plan. They come in and
15 tell us about it.

16 Q. And who's responsible -- in that clean up process you just
17 described, who's responsible for taking out the trash?

18 A. Everybody. Everybody is responsible for taking out the
19 trash. We put it in the back in the galley, and then essentially
20 the galley people take out the trash. They do trash runs, but for
21 the most part, everybody takes out the trash. There's no one set
22 person that's in charge of taking out the trash.

23 Q. So you take out the trash, put it in the galley and --

24 A. Yeah. There's a bin in the back. There's a bin in the back,
25 and then they just take it out.

1 Q. And when you the back, is that outside the galley?

2 A. Yeah, in the rear of the vessel there.

3 Q. Do you happen to know where the galley staff takes it --

4 A. No.

5 Q. -- once it goes out there? Did at any point on March 24th,
6 you enter the wait station that was on the 01 deck after the
7 vessel moored for the evening?

8 A. Um-hum. I went to get a silverware tray because we needed
9 silverware on the second floor, and then that's where I smelled
10 plastic burning but I didn't again pay no mind to it just because
11 I thought it was food burning in the warmer.

12 Q. At the time you went to get the silverware?

13 A. Um-hum.

14 Q. Can you kind of describe for us the exact set up of the wait
15 station? And like starting from the passageway, and we can --
16 we've been using this as like this is the wait station.

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. This is the hallway that goes back --

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. -- to the galley. Can you kind of describe where the trash
21 -- like the glass -- can you just kind of bring us through exactly
22 what was on this wall.

23 A. This particular shelf, this is a shelf here that we have.
24 There's a Pureware (ph.) system like that right here in the
25 corner. And then there's the shelves here that's stacked with

1 plastic shelves.

2 MR. FAWCETT: Mr. Morales, you're looking towards the back of
3 the vessel, the stern.

4 MR. MORALES: I -- no, I am not.

5 MR. FAWCETT: No, no. I'm asking you to turn as if you're
6 looking to the back.

7 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

8 Q. Pretend like this is the galley back there.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Looking from the back of the vessel and then this is that
11 wall into the wait station with the window to the outside.

12 A. Okay.

13 LT [REDACTED] Just for clarification, which we have seen on
14 CCTV, when Mr. Morales entered, he came from the galley past the
15 cold stores and he was walking forward on the vessel to where he
16 grabbed the silverware.

17 MR. FAWCETT: He's describing the center area and to the left
18 would have been the --

19 MR. YOUNG: Right. Essentially, yes.

20 MR. FAWCETT: Essentially. So I just want to make sure what
21 area we're describing.

22 LCDR [REDACTED] Okay.

23 MR. MORALES: So are we going with that point? Are we
24 going --

25 LT [REDACTED] However, we just wanted to clarify that.

1 MR. MORALES: We'll go with that point?

2 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

3 Q. Yes. However you can describe it, that's up to you.

4 A. I went in and grabbed it, grabbed the silverware and then
5 turned. So the coffee station would be here.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. And the glass -- the window would be on this side over here.

8 Q. Got it.

9 A. And, you know, grabbed it, noticed that it smelled, turned
10 around and then went upstairs to the second floor.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. But, yes, there's a Pureware system, there's a shelf here,
13 the coffee station's right over here and the glasses are on this
14 side, particularly next to the window individual.

15 Q. Got it. So you went on the aisle way.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You went on this side.

18 A. Yep.

19 Q. Turned this way.

20 A. Grabbed it, turned.

21 Q. Smelled something.

22 A. Smelled something, paid no mind because they said there was
23 food in the warmers. I thought it was that, and then I went
24 upstairs.

25 Q. Okay. Thank you.

1 A. You're welcome.

2 Q. Did at any point when you -- where you just described, was
3 there anyone else back there with you at that point in time or did
4 you notice anyone go back there?

5 A. No, I don't recall.

6 Q. And we kind of talk about the company's -- and again, I know
7 this is your first trip on this vessel, but do you -- can you tell
8 us anything about the smoking policy? Were you told about the
9 smoking policy by anyone?

10 A. What I was told is there's smoking on the vessel. That's
11 what I was told. So I'm not a smoker. So I usually don't -- it
12 doesn't pertain to me, but I'm pretty sure they tell everybody
13 that, no smoking.

14 Q. Did you happen to witness anyone on either the galley staff
15 or the wait group?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Do you know if passengers are allowed to? You said this was
18 everybody.

19 A. I just tell everybody no.

20 Q. So can we kind of go back to the fire, the point where you
21 smelled the plastic. You went upstairs to the 02 deck.

22 A. Um-hum.

23 Q. How were you notified specifically of the fire --

24 A. One of the managers came up running, I don't remember who it
25 was, just one of them. They came up and said there's a fire and

1 everybody out. And then Cici came up and said, fire, everybody
2 out. Don't grab your stuff. Let's just go. And we went.
3 Everybody got out. Because essentially most of the stuff was on
4 the second floor anyway. There was only a very few people on the
5 first floor. I think it was one, two, three. There were three
6 people on the first floor and then everybody else was upstairs
7 resetting. And they just told everybody to get out. And we all
8 just got out. And again, we were waiting for all the trucks
9 coming.

10 Q. How did you exit?

11 A. We went through the back door. So if I'm looking -- the rear
12 of the boat, the bow, the stern of the boat --

13 Q. Um-hum.

14 A. -- to the right -- to the left, the door to the gangway. We
15 all went out that way. Everybody went out that way.

16 Q. Even the people that were on the main deck?

17 A. Everybody went up to the second floor and went out to that
18 gangway.

19 Q. Can you kind of -- I'm sure that was a scary moment or a
20 moment that -- can you kind of talk us through what was going
21 through your head when you heard about the fire?

22 A. I really didn't get scared essentially because, you know,
23 that typically doesn't happen all the time. So it was just rare
24 that they said fire, you know, believe it or not, that was a
25 practical joke, so, no, there's a fire, and then just trying to

1 get us outside but, you know, when the flames shooting out and all
2 the fire trucks starting coming, I'm like, oh, that must be real
3 then because, you know. It doesn't happen. I've been there for
4 25 years, and it has never happened. So, you know, it's kind of
5 rare that it did happen. So it was just unusual, you know. So.
6 And again, we went outside. Everybody was calm. Everybody did
7 their own thing. Everybody called who they needed to call and,
8 you know, we just hang out and say, hey, we're not going anywhere
9 until -- for a few minutes. And that's what we did.

10 Q. I was going to ask you, in your 25 years' experience, have
11 you ever witnessed a fire?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Did at any point did you notice wait staff or personnel pick
14 up any type of equipment to try to go down -- back downstairs or
15 to grab fire extinguishers, water --

16 A. No.

17 Q. -- anything like that? Just everybody went up --

18 A. Everybody went up.

19 Q. -- to the second deck. So at any point where you were on the
20 vessel from the time you smelled the plastic burning, even on the
21 pier, did you ever hear any alarms go off on the vessel?

22 A. I don't believe so.

23 Q. Not like a smoke alarm or something you would typically hear?

24 A. Again, I don't think so. I'm going to say no.

25 Q. When you were on the pier, did anybody take accountability

1 for the staff on the pier?

2 A. Yeah, Cici and Jeremy did a headcount to make sure they were
3 all there. Sixteen people including the DJs were on there I
4 believe.

5 Q. Including the DJs?

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. How was accountability? Is there like -- did you just all
8 muster together?

9 A. We all pretty much mustered together on the gangway and then
10 we walked towards the dock, to get away from there because the
11 fire trucks were coming. So we gave them room so they could
12 access it. So then we went there. And then from that dock, we
13 moved towards the street because everybody was coming. There was
14 a lot of trucks that day.

15 Q. Did you notice anyone get back on the vessel before the fire
16 department arrived from your little muster?

17 A. I don't think so.

18 Q. Are you aware of any company procedures on how a fire should
19 be reported? When the marine crew's not there, and it's just you
20 cleaning up, did anyone tell you, if you see a fire, what you
21 should do or how you should report it?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Can you kind of describe for us, when you were on the pier,
24 everyone's off, can you kind of describe the scene at the pier?
25 What was the attitudes of the staff? What was emotions like?

1 A. Everybody was, you know, kind of heartbroken about it because
2 it happened. It was cold. It was really cold. It was like 30
3 degrees outside with the wind chill. So it was less than that.
4 But, yeah, for the most part, the ladies were tearing up, because
5 they're like, oh. Essentially everybody was worried to get their
6 stuff, and not worried essentially about the boat. It's just
7 everybody, you know, and everybody couldn't go home because all
8 their stuff -- all of our stuff was in the boat. So they couldn't
9 send us home. It was, you know, it was tense I guess but it
10 wasn't that, you know, we weren't panicking or anything like that.
11 It was just like, all right, we've got this dude through that way,
12 and go from there. The managers were awesome, and just say, hey,
13 come down and we're going to go this way and we're going to do
14 that and then this is where we've got to go, and that's what we
15 done. So, yeah, that was pretty much it.

16 Q. Can you kind of take us through the time, from the time you
17 went on the pier until the time that you were released and got to
18 go home that evening, how long it was?

19 A. It was about 3 hours because we docked at 10. It was about
20 11 o'clock by the time -- 11 o'clock, 12, 1 -- yeah, because I
21 didn't get out until 1:30. I didn't take a cab. I didn't catch
22 the Silver Line until 1:30. That's last Silver Line in Boston.

23 Q. Did you have any discussions with your coworkers about what
24 happened on the pier?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Did you talk to them?

2 A. Everybody was just wondering if they were going to let us --
3 there was priorities to get their stuff because their house keys
4 were in there, car keys, their coats, you know, their wallets and
5 so on, you know. Everybody was just, you know, essentially
6 discussing that. And essentially, you know, that was the talk of
7 the day.

8 Q. Did you speak with any first responders while you were on the
9 pier?

10 A. No, there was a state police gentleman that came over and
11 took our names, IDs, age. Essentially that was the extent of
12 that. And then there was another gentleman that came over and
13 say, hey, you, you know, wait for us. We want to interview you
14 guys, but nothing happened on that.

15 Q. When you were on the pier, when you got off the vessel, did
16 you witness any flames, fire, smoke, anything like that from the
17 pier?

18 A. Yes. When they broke a window, the flames just shot out.
19 One of the fire department broke the window on the bottom deck,
20 and it just -- the flames just came out from there. Yeah, you
21 could see the smoke coming and everybody, they were we just trying
22 to get their, you know, hoses in there, trying to get some water
23 in there. They were breaking all the windows just to get that
24 covered, so it didn't have any more.

25 Q. And when you're talking about the fire department breaking

1 the window, are you talking about the window to the wait station?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any photos or videos that any crew
4 members took while standing on the pier?

5 A. No.

6 Q. I just want to go back real quick to the moment that you were
7 taking the silverware and you said you smelled plastic burning.

8 A. Um-hum.

9 Q. Can you kind of describe -- I know plastic burning, but how
10 do you -- have you smelled plastic burning before? Like --

11 A. Yeah. Essentially, you know, went you put a tablespoon in
12 the stove and then it burns and you smell that, you know, melting
13 smell. The same concept, and that's what it smelled like and then
14 it's like -- again, I thought it was just the -- because they
15 leave aluminum with the warmer. So I thought the aluminum might
16 also smell. It was a different kind of smell. So I thought it
17 was that. I didn't pay no mind to it, but yeah.

18 Q. Did you ever smell or see any smoke --

19 A. No.

20 Q. No.

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. And I'm just going to ask you a quick company question since
23 you've been with them for 25 years. How is information, say
24 policy, new policy on the vessel, what you're going to do, how is
25 that information disseminated to you? Do you have an email? Like

1 how is that --

2 A. We have emails. They also do an orientation, and every pre-
3 shift, we have an announcement that we need to make for anything
4 that we mentioned, for any particular reason. Shift meetings,
5 emails and orientation every year.

6 Q. So your shift meetings, are they held by restaurant managers?
7 Is that who --

8 A. The restaurant managers come in. If the marine crew has a
9 different issue, they'll come in and say something. Essentially
10 if the galley have an issue, they'll come in and say something,
11 but the shift meeting usually makes announcements what in
12 particular is going to go down and what safety measures if we're
13 taking any, they're said there.

14 Q. And the emails, is that like you get all the corporate emails
15 from Hornblower or --

16 A. No, we just get the emails that, you know, pertain to you,
17 essentially whatever your shifts or there's, you know, events or,
18 you know, hey, we're hiring a temp (ph.) today. Invite your
19 friends over. No, no corporate emails, no.

20 Q. And does that go to your personal emails or --

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. -- do you have like a work email?

23 A. Personal email.

24 LCDR ██████████ That's all I have.

25 MR. FAWCETT: Thank you. Keith Fawcett with the Coast Guard.

1 BY MR. FAWCETT:

2 Q. So you mentioned talking about the plastic smell, and then
3 you mentioned aluminum foil in the warmer. This is your first
4 tour on the vessel.

5 A. Um-hum.

6 Q. This was your first day?

7 A. It would be my first shift of the vessel, but I guess my
8 third or fourth day on there.

9 Q. Okay. So during those 3 or 4 days, did you smell a similar
10 smell?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. So I think you said something like aluminum burning in
13 the warmer. Why would you think it's aluminum?

14 A. Well, it's aluminum foil. That's what they do. They put
15 aluminum foil on the trays so they can stay warm, and they just
16 put it in the warmer.

17 Q. And what's the tray made of?

18 A. Essentially aluminum.

19 Q. So it's an aluminum. They wrap it.

20 A. Yep.

21 Q. These are leftover meals --

22 A. Right.

23 Q. -- that the crew.

24 A. Can enjoy.

25 Q. Can you take them home?

1 A. No.

2 Q. So this aluminum, is it like a disposable aluminum pan? Does
3 somebody have to wash it?

4 A. No, it's disposable. We just throw them away if nobody eats
5 it.

6 Q. And had you seen a similar food warmer like that? I mean I
7 had asked before for a different witness like how the warmer
8 works. Does it just have a heating element or something?

9 A. It's just -- it's kind of like a steamer type essentially.
10 I'm not too familiar with how they work.

11 MR. DENLEY: Do you -- have you ever operated the warmer?

12 MR. MORALES: No.

13 MR. DENLEY: Have you ever -- is it part of your job to use
14 the warmer?

15 MR. MORALES: No.

16 MR. DENLEY: Have you -- so you don't really know how to use
17 the warmer?

18 MR. MORALES: I don't know how to use the warmer, yeah.

19 BY MR. FAWCETT:

20 Q. So, Lieutenant Commander ██████ asked you about like if there
21 was a birthday celebration and you talked about how you were
22 tending to your 18 tables and really work on those. But if you
23 had a celebration with a birthday candle, where do the candles
24 come from?

25 A. We have them in the bus station there, next to the coffee

1 maker. That's where they're located, and there's another one in
2 the mid, right next to the bartending station, they're essentially
3 in there.

4 Q. So, looking at a birthday candle, there are, there are two
5 kinds that I'm aware of.

6 A. Um-hum.

7 Q. One is the typical wax one where you light it and you blow it
8 out, the candle's out.

9 A. Right.

10 Q. There's wax over the cake. And then there's kind of a
11 sparker candle that you can't blow it out and it just keeps going.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. What kind of above the vessel?

14 A. We have the wax.

15 Q. The wax.

16 A. Um-hum.

17 Q. As the fire is unfolding, and you're in somewhat a reasonable
18 close proximity to the fire, did you hear anyone in the crew say
19 the words, fire extinguisher?

20 A. No.

21 Q. And Lieutenant Commander ██████ said everybody off the boat.
22 I mean your testimony was that everybody got off the boat. They
23 arranged themselves on the pier. There was a count taken of the
24 number of people above. The count's 16. Is that part of a
25 procedure that you're aware of?

1 A. I guess. I'm going to say yes. It was just human nature
2 type of thing, is everybody here? Count for life, that's all. So
3 you're not forgetting anybody.

4 Q. So in your extensive career above -- in the Boston area on
5 board these vessels, have you received any training, and I'll --
6 by training I mean fire prevention or fire safety and by fire
7 safety, I mean use of a fire extinguisher, use of a fire blanket
8 to smother the flames, pull the general alarm box, for what you
9 should do if there are no marine crew aboard, and you have
10 hospitality people on board, after the marine crew has departed.
11 Have you gotten any training about that?

12 A. No.

13 Q. And other vessels in Boston that you worked on, has the
14 marine crew provided like where -- like orientation to the
15 hospitality crew like where fire extinguishers are, where
16 different pieces of safety equipment is?

17 A. Yes, they have mentioned where the fire extinguishers are and
18 where the life vests are and where -- I don't even think we have
19 blankets. I can tell you that right now. But, yes, they have
20 mentioned where all the big stuff is essentially if we need to get
21 it, and just don anything, if there was an emergency.

22 Q. And during your shift, do they have, on board the *Spirit of*
23 *Boston*, did they have a fire drill or a safety drill of any kind?

24 A. No.

25 Q. On any other Boston vessel that you were aboard, did the

1 marine crew during a drill or training, did they ever use a galley
2 fire as the place where a fire took place?

3 A. I wouldn't know. You know, essentially we work on -- we
4 focus on what we're doing. So the marine crew, if they're doing a
5 drill, they don't usually mention it, and if they're doing a fire
6 drill, to us.

7 Q. So you're not involved -- and I don't want to put words in
8 your mouth. But are you involved in any way as a hospitality
9 worker when they stage a drill or exercise in that you do
10 something where the crew orders you or tells you what to do?

11 A. No.

12 Q. And how about after a drill, have you been part of where the
13 marine crew has like a talk where everybody gets together and they
14 say, hey, we just had a fire drill, and this is what we did right
15 or this is what we did wrong?

16 A. Not to my knowledge, no.

17 Q. So on June 7th of 2022, a vessel in the fleet in a different
18 port had a fire aboard. Were you aware of that?

19 A. Nope.

20 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.

21 A. You're welcome.

22 LT [REDACTED] Mr. Young.

23 BY MR. YOUNG:

24 Q. Are you okay to keep going for a few more questions?

25 A. Sure.

1 Q. Okay. Thank you again. This is Brian Young. I'm with the
2 NTSB. We talked earlier about the safety announcement at the
3 start of the cruise. Does someone actually speak into a
4 microphone or is there a recording?

5 A. Somebody speaks into a microphone, yes.

6 Q. Is it --

7 A. And on boats, some boats have recordings.

8 Q. Okay. Do you know what the *Spirit of Boston* was that night?

9 A. I can't recall.

10 Q. Okay. Could it be the DJ speaking or the captain, was it
11 something like or it could be anybody? You don't know?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay. This is your first shift, but your third trip. I
14 didn't understand how --

15 A. So I've been on the boat before.

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. So this is my first shift because the season started. So
18 this is the first I work a shift, and I can be on and do work.

19 Q. So was this the first time of the entire season --

20 A. Um-hum.

21 Q. -- that the *Spirit of Boston* went out to do a cruise?

22 A. Yeah. Well, for me.

23 Q. For you. Okay.

24 A. Prior to that, there's been a couple more, but this is the
25 first one that I got scheduled to work on this particular ship.

1 Q. Okay. But before that, you had been working on other
2 vessels?

3 A. No, the seasons hasn't picked up. The *Odyssey* was dry
4 docked. The *Seaport Elite* was dry docked. Those are usually the
5 ones I handle. But they came back that same day. So we didn't
6 have shifts on that particular boat. So I just took a shift on
7 the *Spirit*. We can do that.

8 Q. Okay. Great. I understand there was a bunch of individuals
9 on the first deck. That's where you were working because it was
10 dine out week --

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. -- and some people came. If they were to order food, would
13 that be off a menu or would there be a buffet table for them to --

14 A. We have a buffet section where they have the ability to go up
15 and obviously take as much as you want.

16 Q. You can eat all you want?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And how do they keep the food warm at the buffet table?

19 A. They have warmers inside the chafers.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And then the galley takes care of all that stuff.

22 Q. And before the cruise ends which obviously you got back to
23 the dock around 10 o'clock --

24 A. Um-hum.

25 Q. -- right? What time do they start ending the dinner service?

- 1 A. 9:30.
- 2 Q. 9:30.
- 3 A. 9:30, about that time, because desserts usually come out
4 around that time. So we have -- we clear the dinner portion, and
5 then we put the dessert station on so they can have access to
6 that.
- 7 Q. Okay. And do you have anything to do with extinguishing the
8 heaters underneath?
- 9 A. We don't do any of that, no.
- 10 Q. Okay. Do you know how many DJs were aboard that night?
- 11 A. Two.
- 12 Q. Do they play at the same time?
- 13 A. They do.
- 14 Q. Is one up --
- 15 A. One up on the second floor, one on the first floor.
- 16 Q. Okay. Two separate --
- 17 A. Two separate DJs.
- 18 Q. Obviously different music.
- 19 A. Um-hum.
- 20 Q. You have high school kids upstairs.
- 21 A. Yeah. Dancing grownups downstairs.
- 22 Q. Do people dance?
- 23 A. Yeah, for the most part.
- 24 Q. Really.
- 25 A. Not their best moment.

1 Q. You talked about getting the meal in a heating unit, the
2 warmer. Where is that warmer that keeps the food for the crew?
3 Where would you go to get it?

4 MR. DENLEY: Objection. I think he said he doesn't have
5 anything to do with that.

6 LT [REDACTED] He said where do you go to get the food. That's
7 more --

8 MR. MORALES: The table in the center of or towards the end
9 of the back of the bow, the stern. It's in the stern somewhere in
10 the middle, and then there's like a U-shaped type of thing and
11 that's where are all the chafers are and all the -- that's where
12 they put the food. That's our section for the servers.

13 BY MR. YOUNG:

14 Q. Is that in the passenger section?

15 A. That is in the passenger section, yes.

16 Q. On the first deck?

17 A. Um-hum.

18 Q. Okay. Because we understood that there is a warmer in the
19 pantry that's not used, and I was trying to establish if that was
20 the one or not. So the food is kept in the passenger section --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- forward of the galley. And I was making a note when you
23 were talking about shift meetings. You have the shift meeting
24 before every cruise?

25 A. Um-hum.

- 1 Q. Did you have one the evening --
- 2 A. We did.
- 3 Q. Yep.
- 4 A. Yes.
- 5 Q. And who spoke? Who organized it?
- 6 A. Managers, Cici and Jeremy. They're the ones that explained
- 7 what's happening on the boat, who's coming in, what kind of groups
- 8 do we have, what kind of packages do we have, anything else that
- 9 needs to be said is said there.
- 10 Q. Did you have any problems with any of the guests --
- 11 A. Nope.
- 12 Q. -- misbehaving?
- 13 A. Nope.
- 14 Q. How about out of the crew? Anybody have any problems --
- 15 A. No.
- 16 Q. -- where they were disciplined or had any issues?
- 17 A. Not that I know of, no.
- 18 Q. Nobody got fired that night?
- 19 A. Nobody got fired that night. It was a good night.
- 20 Q. Good. And did you take any pictures or videos during or
- 21 after the fire?
- 22 A. Yes, after the fire.
- 23 Q. And is it of the vessel?
- 24 A. Of the vessel, yes.
- 25 Q. Is there anything that might help us understand what may have

1 happened?

2 A. Possibly, yes.

3 Q. Is that something that you might be able to share with us?

4 A. We can.

5 Q. Is it a video or a picture?

6 A. It's a picture.

7 Q. And is it looking through the window --

8 A. Aw, no.

9 Q. No.

10 A. No. it's just a picture of the boat.

11 Q. Okay. Maybe that's we could work with.

12 A. It's in --

13 Q. Okay. Perfect.

14 A. I can send it to you guys.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. Anything I have, you can have.

17 Q. Thank you. And the last question I have is there was a
18 little bit of confusion where the garbage is taken. So after all
19 the garbage is taken out of the locations, it's brought back to
20 the galley.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Or, behind the galley outside?

23 A. There's a little section in the back of the rear of the
24 galley that's open that's where everybody puts the garbage.

25 Q. Is that outside on deck? Through a door and you're outside

1 behind like a --

2 A. No.

3 Q. -- like a screen?

4 A. No, you're actually on the -- it's like a small deck in the
5 stern that can lead you to the outside if you went that way. So
6 essentially if the boat is here --

7 Q. Yep.

8 A. -- this is the galley, this is a small deck that's covered.
9 So you can stick it off that way.

10 Q. Okay. So it's outside the galley.

11 A. It's outside the galley.

12 Q. But inside the vessel.

13 A. It's on the vessel, yes. It's a deck on the vessel.

14 Q. Okay. But it's not the stern where the big refrigerators
15 are?

16 A. No.

17 Q. No.

18 A. I don't believe so.

19 Q. And then what happens to it after that?

20 A. The galley crew or the marine crew take them out off the
21 vessel.

22 Q. Okay. Thank you very much.

23 A. You're welcome.

24 Q. I appreciate it.

25 LT [REDACTED] Mr. Denley.

1 MR. DENLEY: Yeah, I do, just a couple.

2 BY MR. DENLEY:

3 Q. When you talked about smelling the burning smell, when you
4 went back and got like -- I guess before the fire, and then you
5 said you thought it might have been the food in the warmer. Where
6 was that warmer?

7 A. So here's the boat. Okay. This is the galley, okay, and
8 there's a small portion of the pantry and then the galley section.
9 Okay. Where there's a stairwell going down before you turn to the
10 right. So there's a warmer here, and right next to the
11 dishwasher, and that's where they keep the food. So the
12 dishwasher's here, the warmer's here, and there's another table
13 here, and there's a grill section over here.

14 Q. In the galley.

15 A. In the galley. It's in the galley right here. That's where
16 I thought it was coming from.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you. You, you know, you've obviously worked for
18 the company for quite a few years, 25 years.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. In all of those years, you've been in the restaurant --

21 A. Um-hum.

22 Q. -- restaurant side of the business?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. So, during those 25 years, who on board the vessel is
25 responsible for fighting fires if there's a fire on board?

1 A. The marine crew.

2 Q. And who on board is responsible for treating medical issues
3 or medical accidents?

4 A. The marine crew.

5 Q. If the vessel were to take on -- start to flood or take on
6 water, or anything like that, who would be responsible for address
7 that?

8 A. The marine crew.

9 Q. So if there's an emergency on board, who's responsible for
10 trying to address that emergency?

11 A. The marine crew.

12 Q. Okay. Thank you.

13 A. You're welcome.

14 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

15 Q. I just have one follow-up question to Mr. Denley's question
16 when you identified all those scenarios. You identified the
17 marine crew. What about the 2 hours you're on board the vessel
18 after the marine crew leaves. Who's responsible for all that if
19 there is no marine crew on board?

20 MR. DENLEY: Objection. Calls for speculation.

21 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

22 Q. I'm just asking on the night of the accident.

23 LCDR [REDACTED] He said he's been employed with the company
24 for 25 years.

25 BY LCDR [REDACTED]

1 Q. If there is no -- because you stated the marine crew, but we
2 know that the marine crew's not on board. So during the time
3 period, who's responsible for all that if the marine crew's not
4 there?

5 A. That's a very good question. I would say it would be the
6 managers' responsibility because essentially everybody's above my
7 pay grade. So this is my job. This is everybody else's job, and
8 every other safety issue after that, that belongs to them. So
9 therefore I would probably say that at that point. Essentially
10 everybody's management. If I'm not management, everybody else is
11 management. So everybody should be, you know, essentially that.
12 So I'm going to say management has to do it, because essentially
13 that's what everybody is.

14 LCDR [REDACTED] Thank you.

15 LT [REDACTED] Mr. Morales, thank you again for joining us. It
16 is not 1712, and that concludes your interview. Thank you.

17 (Whereupon, at 5:12 p.m., the interview was concluded.)
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE ABOARD THE *SPIRIT OF BOSTON*
 NEAR THE BOSTON SPORTS DISTRICT
 IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
 ON MARCH 24, 2023
 Interview of Eddie Morales

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.



Kathryn A. Mirfin
Transcriber