

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

* * * * *

Investigation of: *

*

FIRE AND SINKING OF THE CONCEPTION *

WITH LOSS OF LIFE NEAR * Accident No.: DCA19MM047

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, CALIFORNIA, *

SEPTEMBER 2, 2019 *

*

* * * * *

Interview of: GLEN FRITZLER
Owner, Truth Aquatics

Thursday,
September 5, 2019

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

ANDREW EHLERS, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

BARTON BARNUM, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

BRIAN YOUNG, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

CDR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
11th District
United States Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
Marine Safety Detachment Santa Barbara
United States Coast Guard

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
U.S. Coast Guard National Centers of Expertise

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
U.S. Coast Guard National Center of Expertise

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] Investigator
U.S. Coast Guard National Center of Expertise

CAPT. JAMES SNODGRASS
Santa Barbara County Fire Department

DET. TRAVIS HENDERSON
Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office

RUSSELL BROWN, Attorney
(On behalf of Mr. Fritzler)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>I N D E X</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interview of Glen Fritzler:		
By Mr. Ehlers		6
By LT [REDACTED]		18
By Mr. Muise		16
By LT [REDACTED]		20
By Capt. Snodgrass		21
By Mr. Barnum		26
By Mr. [REDACTED]		33
By Mr. Ehlers		34
By Mr. Muise		36
By LT [REDACTED]		37
By LT [REDACTED]		38
By Capt. Snodgrass		38
By Mr. Barnum		40
By Mr. Young		41
By Mr. Ehlers		49

I N T E R V I E W

(8:20 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. EHLERS: All right. Good morning. It's approximately
4 0820 in Santa Barbara, California. This is the interview of Mr.
5 Glen Fritzler in regard to the accident involving the vessel
6 Conception. Mr. Fritzler, can you state your name and spell your
7 name, your last name, please?

8 MR. FRITZLER: Glen Fritzler. Spelling of the last name, F-
9 R-I-T-Z-L-E-R.

10 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Thank you. Purpose of the investigation
11 is to increase safety. It's not to assign fault, blame or
12 liability, and our aim is to prevent accidents in the future.
13 Having said that, we can't offer confidentiality or immunity as
14 part of these proceedings. Do you understand that this interview
15 is voluntary?

16 MR. FRITZLER: Yes.

17 MR. EHLERS: Okay. We are recording this interview. The
18 transcript will be made available in our public docket. Do you
19 understand that this is a recorded interview?

20 MR. FRITZLER: I do.

21 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. Thank you, sir. All right.
22 I'll begin then just asking you some questions. First of all, can
23 you tell me your position?

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Excuse me. First just go around the
25 room.

1 MR. EHLERS: Oh, I'm sorry. Let me, let me back up. Hold
2 on.

3 MR. FRITZLER: Okay.

4 MR. EHLERS: Okay. I'd like everyone in the room to please,
5 introduce yourselves and spell your last name.

6 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise with the NTSB, M-U-I-S-E.

7 LT [REDACTED] Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from Coast Guard
8 Investigations National Center of Expertise. Last name's spelled
9 [REDACTED].

10 LT [REDACTED] Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast
11 Guard MSD Santa Barbara, [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

12 CAPT. SNODGRASS: Captain James Snodgrass with Santa Barbara
13 County Fire. Last name's S-N-O-D-G-R-A-S-S.

14 MR. HENDERSON: Detective Travis Henderson with the Santa
15 Barbara County Sheriffs Office. Last name is H-E-N-D-E-R-S-O-N.

16 MR. BARNUM: Bart Barnum with the NTSB Office of Marine
17 Safety. Last name B-A-R-N-U-M.

18 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Investigations National
19 Center of Expertise. Last name [REDACTED].

20 MR. EHLERS: And Mr. Brown?

21 MR. BROWN: Russell Brown, counsel for the witness.

22 MR. EHLERS: Okay. And that's B-R-O-W-N, correct, sir?

23 MR. BROWN: Yes.

24 MR. YOUNG: This is Brian Young with the National
25 Transportation Safety Board, Y-O-U-N-G.

1 CDR [REDACTED] Commander [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the 11th Coast
2 Guard Districts. Last name's [REDACTED].

3 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Coast Guard Investigations
4 National Center of Expertise. My last name is [REDACTED].

5 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. Let me start again.

6 MR. FRITZLER: Okay.

7 INTERVIEW OF GLEN FRITZLER

8 BY MR. EHLERS:

9 Q. Sir, can you tell me your position?

10 A. I am owner of the vessel Conception, President of Truth
11 Aquatics, the operating company.

12 Q. Okay. How long have you been in business?

13 A. Since 1974.

14 Q. Okay. Can you tell me a little about your company, Truth
15 Aquatics, the size, the number of people you have working for you?

16 A. Truth Aquatics has three vessels. It employs six crewmen per
17 vessel. We have, at lease with the city of Santa Barbara at the
18 landside facility known as Sea Landing in Santa Barbara Harbor.
19 And we have approximately 10 employees at that location.

20 Q. Okay. Can you explain just a little bit about the ownership
21 of the vessel, vice the operations of the vessel through Truth
22 Aquatics.

23 A. Yeah. The vessel is owned by the Fritzler Family Trust and
24 leased to Truth Aquatics, the operating company.

25 Q. Okay. All right. And both of those are, you are the owner

1 of both of those entities?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay. Tell me a little bit about how you hire crew for your
4 vessels.

5 A. A lot of times its people who have come out on the boat that
6 have an interest in diving. And then sometimes we run ads in
7 different publications, like The Log that goes up and down the
8 coast. People apply. We check out their interviews in the office
9 and then we send them out with the captain of the boat and then
10 ultimately the captain makes the decision if he's a candidate they
11 can work on the boat with and they can all get along.

12 Q. Okay. As far as the captain of the boat, what are their
13 qualifications or what are their requirements?

14 A. They have to be 100-ton Master or better, in order to run the
15 vessel.

16 Q. Okay. And other than a licensing, what other training or --
17 we'll talk the masters first. What are their requirements for
18 training? Do you have any additional requirements?

19 A. Not beyond the Coast Guard regulations.

20 Q. Okay. All right. As far as your masters, do you do regular
21 evaluations, like a performance evaluation for them?

22 A. Well, it's pretty much, you know, if they get bad reviews by
23 customers, they wouldn't be, they wouldn't remain on the payroll.
24 They, you know, no, I mean no other evaluations besides that. I
25 mean it's just how they preform is what we look at.

1 Q. Okay. And how many qualified masters do you have working for
2 you?

3 A. Well we have three full time and then probably eight
4 additional for fill-ins that have worked with the business over
5 the years.

6 Q. Okay. Do they rotate between boats, all of the captains or
7 are they designated to one of your boats as --

8 A. They're designated.

9 Q. Okay. All right. And Captain Boylan was a regular captain
10 of that vessel, of the Conception?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. All right. Let's see. Speaking of the crew of the
13 Conception, how long had Captain Boylan work for you?

14 A. Probably 25 years.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. You know, there was a period, I think, where he took off for
17 awhile but then came back.

18 Q. Was he always a master or did he come up through deckhand?

19 A. Originally, he came up as a deckhand and then obtained his
20 sea time in order to get his captain license through Truth
21 Aquatics.

22 Q. Okay. All right. Have you ever had any issues of
23 performance with Captain Boylan, any concerns with his running of
24 the vessel?

25 A. Not at all.

1 Q. Okay. The Second Captain Molitor, is he is a licensed master
2 as well? Do you know?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. Do you always put two captains on the vessel when they
5 are going out for a dive trip or --

6 A. The Coast Guard requirements are any trip that is over 12
7 hours has to have an additional captain.

8 Q. Okay. All right. And Second Captain Molitor, he was
9 licensed master?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. 100 ton?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. All right. For your deckhands, what kind of training
14 to they get prior to joining a vessel?

15 A. Well they get their training on board the vessel by the
16 captain.

17 Q. Okay. Are they employed as a deckhand and then trained, on
18 the job training?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. The deckhand, Mr. French, do you know how long he has
21 worked as a deckhand for your company?

22 A. You know, I don't. We'd have to check the records. I don't
23 know.

24 Q. Okay. Any idea? Has it been awhile? Has it been --

25 A. It's been a year.

1 Q. Okay. Yeah. All right. And same with the deckhand,
2 Mr. Kurtz?

3 A. Ms. Kurtz?

4 Q. Miss. I'm sorry. Ms. Kurtz.

5 A. She's fairly new. I would say within the last couple of
6 months.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Had she been out on the boat prior to that
8 though? Do you know?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. As a diver?

11 A. As a deckhand.

12 Q. As a deckhand?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Okay. All right. Had she prior to being hired by you, had
15 she been out on the boat as a diver or --

16 A. Not to my knowledge.

17 Q. Not to your knowledge. Okay. For your galley employees, are
18 they also crew members in a nautical sense, do they provide --

19 A. In a nautical sense, yeah, but their primary objective is to
20 prepare food and clean.

21 Q. Okay. All right. Do they, for all your crews, do they
22 regularly drill in emergencies?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Does that emergency drill include fire?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Do you have, do they keep logs of those emergency
2 drills?

3 A. That's up to the captain. But I believe they might have had
4 a log on board.

5 Q. Okay. It was on board at the time?

6 A. Yeah. It's all on board.

7 Q. Okay. All right. Speaking -- I'd like to turn a little bit
8 to company policies and procedures. Do you have a company safety
9 policy? Anything written as far as safety?

10 A. On board the vessel?

11 Q. On board for the vessel or company wide.

12 A. I would have to look. Most of that stuff is on board the
13 boat.

14 Q. Okay. And similar question with operating procedures. Are
15 there company wide operating procedures?

16 A. No.

17 Q. This would be things like watch standing procedures, anything
18 like that.

19 A. No, not company. It's, again, the captains are qualified
20 captains and how that's conducted is up to them.

21 Q. Okay. All right. Are there any company wide policies as far
22 as work, rest schedule, in other words amount of rest that crew
23 members get?

24 A. Again, that's all run by the captain. It's not like, a
25 standard time because of, you know, they may be moving the boat

1 during the day, and then that rest period would be taken advantage
2 of by some, so. It's, again, it's a captain's call on the boat.

3 Q. Okay. Do the crew members, when the vessel is engaged in a
4 diving, do the crew members dive with the customers?

5 A. Occasionally one of the crewmen may go dive, but not with,
6 but just as a break to the crewmen. But they, we don't actually
7 conduct dives with guests.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. We don't have dive masters, so to say.

10 Q. So, your customers bring that with them.

11 A. They, customers generally some elect to dive alone and then
12 others will dive in buddy teams and they're, they're conducting
13 their own diving.

14 Q. Okay. Do you run dive trip through the company or is it
15 always through a charter, through a dive company?

16 A. Both.

17 Q. Both? Okay. And during the accident voyage, was it a dive
18 trip scheduled through the company or through another
19 organization?

20 A. It was a charter through another organization.

21 Q. Okay. And that was, that charter was organized by that other
22 organization?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. And do you know what the name of the company or organization
25 was?

1 A. Yes. It's the Finstad Worldwide Dive Tours.

2 Q. Okay. Turning now to the vessel itself, the Conception, I'm
3 going to ask you some pretty basic questions about the vessel.

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. Can you tell me when it was built? How it was constructed?

6 A. I certainly can. It was built in 1980, launched 1981 in Long
7 Beach, California by a company named Seaway Boat Company. I
8 participated in the construction of the boat from the beginning.

9 It is a cold-molded plywood, glued and screwed vessel, with a
10 -- pardon me, with a fiberglass exterior.

11 Q. Okay. The vessel has been under your ownership the entire
12 time?

13 A. Yes, it has.

14 Q. Okay. Have there been any issues with the vessel
15 mechanically or with the hull, or anything throughout its history
16 of note?

17 A. No. Not prior to a transient stealing the boat about 12
18 years ago and putting it on the beach up by Vandenberg, where it
19 went through extensive repairs after that grounding.

20 Mechanically, nothing to note that is not normal.

21 Q. Okay. During that, in the repairs, who did the repairs for
22 that?

23 A. The Ventura Harbor Boatyard.

24 Q. Okay. And was there any damage to the running gear? In
25 other words, the propellers, rudders, et cetera?

1 A. Yeah. Everything was destroyed on the bottom of the boat.
2 All the, all the running gear was torched off in able to get the
3 thing off the beach. So, everything was, you know, rebuilt and
4 new. The interior and exterior keel was rebuilt, and the bottom
5 was re-laminated.

6 Q. Okay. The vessel was, were the engines also replaced?

7 A. They, yes. At that point they were taken out and then
8 rebuilt.

9 Q. Okay. How bout the generator on board. A single generator?

10 A. Single generator.

11 Q. Do you know the make of that generator?

12 A. It's a John Deere. Well it's a Northern Lights with a John
13 Deere diesel. And I don't know what type of generator. Northern
14 Lights put together the package.

15 Q. Is that an original generator or is that, has that been
16 replaced since the vessel was built?

17 A. No. It has been replaced.

18 Q. Okay. Do you remember when that was done?

19 A. No, I don't. Oh, pardon me. On that one, yes. That one was
20 replaced recently within the last couple of years on that, on that
21 vessel.

22 Q. Okay. Are there any -- how can I ask this question? Any,
23 from your knowledge of the boat, which I understand is pretty
24 extensive, do you have any sense of where sources of fire may have
25 begun? Any ideas?

1 A. It just seems to me it had to be in the salon area. The
2 engine room, if there was an engine fire has a CO2 fixed system
3 and that would have gone off from heat. And by looking at the
4 photographs of how the boat burned, it seemed like it started
5 there.

6 And in order to trap those people, I would think it would
7 have been in the salon area.

8 Q. Okay. Let me back up to the engine room and the firefighting
9 system there. You mentioned it would have gone off by the heat.
10 What kind of heat activation system? Do you know what it was?

11 A. Well, I don't know the brand and stuff. I know that it's a
12 little round canister that's a heat canister that gets tested with
13 our annual inspections. But it's just a heat source that once
14 that thing, it will automatically discharge the CO2.

15 Q. Okay. Is there a way to remotely, or excuse me, manually
16 discharge that CO2?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And where is that discharge or is there multiple locations?

19 A. No. There's one location and it's out on the main deck, on
20 the aft deck, outboard on the port side.

21 Q. Okay. You mentioned in the galley area, what potential
22 sources of heat or such would be in that area?

23 A. Well, all the cooking appliances are forward in the galley.
24 As we looked at yesterday, there is that, on that boat there's a
25 two-burner stovetop, there is a flat griddle and there is a double

1 oven and microwave, as far as cooking devices.

2 Q. Okay. I understand there was a barbeque or was barbeque
3 grill also on the vessel. Where is that located at?

4 A. That's located on the aft deck, aft of the entrance into the
5 salon.

6 Q. Okay. And what was the heat source for that.

7 A. That's electric.

8 Q. That is electric, as well?

9 A. Yes.

10 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. At this point, I'm going to
11 turn it over to Marcel Muise, few more questions.

12 MR. MUISE: Good morning. And this is Marcel Muise with the
13 NTSB.

14 BY MR. MUISE:

15 Q. Captain, can you describe some of the upgrades that you might
16 have had to do in the late '90s when the new regulations came out,
17 specifically for fire fighting, lifesaving, bilge alarms, I think
18 were a new thing as well?

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. It would have been 1999-ish.

21 A. Maybe during that period is when there was a requirement to
22 go to 100 percent life floats. So, we added additional life
23 floats to get to the number of passengers that the boat was
24 certified for. And then the fixed CO2 system went into the engine
25 room.

1 Q. Okay. We were on a near sister last night. Is the life
2 floats and life jacket arrangement on that vessel similar to the
3 Conception?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Is your crew or employees or your self ever
6 participated in a casualty exercise with the local responders or
7 with the Coast Guard? Tabletop exercise or some training?

8 A. Have we ever been involved in any accident?

9 Q. Yeah. And then participated -- no, not an accident but an
10 exercise, a training exercise?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. Do you, are you aware of any pre-incident plans that
13 they might have?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. What agency would that be?

16 A. We have a, it's called a lost control that is, that covers
17 like, emergencies on board the boat.

18 Q. What agency? Do you know what agency that is?

19 A. No, it's not an agency. It's something that we have that we
20 have, we were required to have this when we became a
21 concessionaire for the National Park.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. So, we have that.

24 Q. And the only question, the door to the salon on the aft, from
25 the aft deck, is that normally open at night?

1 A. Always.

2 Q. It's always open.

3 MR. MUISE: Okay. That's all I have, Andrew.

4 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Quick question. Is there a door or is it
5 just open?

6 MR. FRITZLER: No, there is a door that gets used when the
7 boat is at, tied to the dock.

8 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. I'm just going to go ahead
9 and go around the room. Lieutenant [REDACTED]

10 LT [REDACTED] Good Morning, Captain. This is Lieutenant [REDACTED]
11 [REDACTED] from the Coast Guard Investigations Center of Expertise.

12 BY LT [REDACTED]

13 Q. Could you, how long was the captain, master of the
14 Conception? Like how long had he been on that particular vessel?

15 A. Well as I mentioned earlier, he was in our employ
16 approximately 25 years and probably at least 20 of that he was the
17 master.

18 Q. Awesome. Thank you. Could you describe, like in general,
19 obviously he's responsible for the vessel, what are his
20 responsibilities when the vessel is at anchor?

21 A. He's in command of the entire boat. So, I just look at
22 that's what he is. He's the master.

23 Q. Okay. You did answer the question as to whether or not you
24 had any specific training program. But do you hold any other
25 company-wide training besides fire drills?

1 A. We do CPR training as required. And then the captains, I
2 believe they, they are the ones that do the drills onboard the
3 boat with the crew.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you. Could you tell me a little bit about your
5 company's culture, like relationships, priorities, principles?

6 A. Are you speaking of relationships with the crew or with
7 customers?

8 Q. All of the above, sir.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. So, your day to day operations, you company's culture?

11 A. I think our culture is a really friendly culture. It feels
12 like a family. I think everybody, you know, tends to get along.
13 Those that don't mix with the crew don't stay.

14 So, I feel there's a real family culture involved. And I'd
15 have to say it's the same with the customers. You know, in this
16 case this group, this organization, the Finstads have been diving
17 with us.

18 The father, who was not onboard, the deceased daughter who
19 organized this trip has been coming out with us for probably 30
20 years. And there were a lot of people that were on that boat that
21 were actually close friends with the captain and crew.

22 And so, I just feel likes its more of a family atmosphere.
23 That's why it's hitting us so hard, is that they're, they were
24 pretty close people. That's the culture, I feel.

25 Q. Do you consider safety a priority?

1 A. Absolutely.

2 Q. How is your relationship with the local Coast Guard Marine
3 Safety Detachment? Without getting into specifics as far as
4 deficiencies, how have your inspections gone?

5 A. Very well. I feel that our relationships have always been
6 good. And I feel like we have a reputation of that. And I think
7 that, you know, the records will prove that.

8 LT [REDACTED] Thank you very much, sir. That's all I have.

9 LT [REDACTED] One question for now, sir. This is
10 Lieutenant [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard MSC Santa
11 Barbara.

12 BY LT [REDACTED]

13 Q. You mentioned that the vessel itself was owned by the
14 Fritzler Family Trust and leased to Truth Aquatics. Was that
15 correct?

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. Okay. Does Truth Aquatics also employ the crew for the
18 vessels?

19 A. Yes, it does.

20 Q. As well as the office staff?

21 A. Yes, it does.

22 Q. Okay. Great. And you, how many employees again was that?

23 A. Six per vessel and approximately 10 in the office.

24 Q. Okay. Great. Thank you.

25 A. And that's six per vessel each trip.

1 Q. Mm-hmm. Yes.

2 A. So, there is obviously a lot of part-time as well.

3 Q. Understood. Thank you. So, with, you did mention there is
4 not a dive master for the vessels. Is there an expectation of
5 providing that from the, those who charter the vessel and come on
6 board to dive? Is there an expectation of certification and
7 qualifications levels on their part?

8 A. Well there is an expectation, yes, they are, they have to be
9 certified divers. That's our expectation. And they, when they
10 sign in, they sign in that they are a certified diver.

11 Q. Understood. Do you record their licensing, or sorry, their
12 certification before they get underway?

13 A. They're required, I believe -- I have to think back on this.
14 They're required to put it down when they print their name in on
15 that manifest.

16 LT [REDACTED] Okay. Understood. Thank you. That's all
17 I have. MR. FRITZLER: Thanks.

18 CAPT. [REDACTED] Captain [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I've got a couple
19 questions.

20 BY CAPT. [REDACTED]

21 Q. When was the last time you were on the boat?

22 A. On the Conception?

23 Q. Yes, the Conception.

24 A. It's been awhile. I can't recall.

25 Q. Okay. Are you aware of any issues whatsoever with the boat?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. Has there been any recent work done to the boat?

3 A. There is always work being done.

4 Q. Okay. What about electrical systems? I mean, what kind of
5 work have been done recently?

6 A. Well there's, there's just I would call it routine
7 maintenance. There's always a list that we have ongoing.

8 Q. Okay.

9 A. But nothing major. No major --

10 Q. No major work?

11 A. No major work, no.

12 Q. Okay. Has the electrical system been upgraded?

13 A. Maintained.

14 Q. Maintained? Okay. So, you haven't added additional
15 receptacles?

16 A. No.

17 Q. It's all as original designed?

18 A. Well over the years, things have changed.

19 Q. Yes.

20 A. But again all, any and all of those changes would have been
21 noted by the Coast Guard inspections annually.

22 Q. Okay. And so, you have a, I mean any of those upgrades would
23 have been done by an electrician?

24 A. Sometimes it can be the crew. I do have an electrician that
25 has come in. Depending on the scope of the work that's been done.

1 Q. Okay.

2 A. Yeah.

3 Q. And when was the last time any of those upgrades may have
4 been done?

5 A. I don't really know. I can't answer that.

6 Q. Okay. Do you know how many breakers there were dedicated to
7 the receptacles that were in that salon area or saloon?

8 A. No. Personally, I can't recall. But I'm sure that Captain
9 Boylan would have a better idea of that.

10 Q. Okay. Are you aware of -- I know we've talked about people
11 plugging a lot of things in and stuff like that, are you aware of
12 any issues with the breakers tripping and having to be reset?

13 A. No. I'm not aware.

14 Q. Okay. The detection systems, whose, do you know when, and so
15 I'm talking about like the heat detectors and smoke detectors. Do
16 you know when those would have been last inspected or tested?

17 A. The vessel just went through an inspection, I believe, in
18 February.

19 Q. Okay. And that was a private company that comes or who does
20 that?

21 A. No, no. That, well -- a private company comes in to do the
22 fire suppression system, you know, check the CO2 tanks and the
23 fire extinguishers. But the rest of it is inspected as far as
24 like smoke alarms and heat sensors, all that is inspected by the
25 Coast Guard.

1 Q. Okay. So, you don't have anybody else come in and test the
2 actual heat detection system and the smoke detection system?

3 A. No. That's done by Coast Guard, like I said. Yeah.

4 Q. Now the system I saw on that ship last night, it was a
5 mixture of a smoke detectors down below and then heat detectors up
6 above.

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Was that the same way for the Conception?

9 A. I can't answer that 100 percent accurately. Again, I think
10 you'd have to ask Jerry.

11 Q. Okay. And then one of the things I noticed was that there
12 was an audible and visual panel that was up in the wheelhouse. Do
13 you know if that was connected to the heat detectors and smoke
14 detectors?

15 A. I think we looked at that last night and we did notice that
16 there was a fire alarm on that panel for the bunkroom. And we
17 looked for that heat sensor and couldn't find it. And I think, to
18 the best of my recollection is that when the rules changes about
19 putting smoke detectors down below, that was probably disabled and
20 then the smoke detectors took over.

21 Q. Okay. And then, do you know when the Coast Guard does their
22 check, if they actually check those heat detectors to see if there
23 some sort of activation in the wheelhouse?

24 A. I believe they do.

25 Q. Okay. And then, let's see, suppression systems. You said

1 all suppression systems including the CO2 system downstairs would
2 have been serviced back in February?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. And then, the same company that does the
5 extinguishers?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And what's the, what's your smoking policy on the
8 boats?

9 A. All smoking has to be at the aft part of the vessel, outside.

10 Q. Okay. So, there is smoking allowed?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. What about vaping and other products similar to
13 smoking?

14 A. You know, honestly, I haven't been on the boats much myself.
15 And that's kind of a new thing, so I don't know what, how, what
16 takes place with vaping.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. But nothing would be inside the vessel because there's so
19 many people that are sensitive to any of that. So, anything like
20 that would be on the back deck.

21 Q. Do you know if your crew smokes?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. All of them? Or how many?

24 A. No. I know that like the captain smokes. But I don't know
25 about the rest of them.

1 Q. Okay. And your experiences on the boats, it looks like most
2 of your receptacles and stuff is in that saloon area or salon
3 area. How does that typically work when people go to bed? I'm
4 guessing people charge like GoPro's and stuff like that. Is that
5 what you typically see or --

6 A. That's what I would typically see, yes.

7 Q. And how many electronics would be plugged in? I know it
8 varies but just --

9 A. Again, I'm not, yeah, I'm just not on the boats that much so
10 it's hard for me to tell. And again, a lot of this stuff is a lot
11 newer. I ran the boats more 20 years ago, so.

12 CAPT. SNODGRASS: Okay. I think that's all I have. Thank
13 you.

14 MR. EHLERS: Okay.

15 MR. HENDERSON: Good morning, sir. Travis Henderson with the
16 Sheriffs office. I'm a detective. I have no questions.

17 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Bart?

18 MR. BARNUM: Yeah. Good Morning, sir. Barton Barnum with
19 NTSB.

20 BY MR. BARNUM:

21 Q. You answered some of these questions for me on the boat last
22 night, but I just want to repeat them today, get them on the
23 record.

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. Sir, could you clarify the type of main engines? Were they

1 the Detroit Diesels V8-92 series?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And they were repowered, you say 12 years ago?

4 A. Well the, those engines went in from the original engines on
5 the boat. But those engines had been rebuilt probably within the
6 last 3 years.

7 Q. Okay. And there is one generator, Northern Lights, with a
8 John Deere prime mover?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Where were the air conditioner units for the accommodations
11 located?

12 A. They are located down in the berthing area, about midships in
13 the bilge.

14 Q. Okay. Underneath a bunk or --

15 A. Underneath a bunk.

16 Q. Okay. How about your air compressors?

17 A. Air compressors are located in the engine room. There's an
18 additional nitrox, what we call a nitrox generator located in the
19 lazarette.

20 Q. Did you have any external fuel tanks on deck anywhere?

21 A. We had a gas can located aft, in a box on the, well, port or
22 starboard side. I'm not sure what side they kept it on. But on
23 the, at the transom.

24 Q. Ten-gallon, 10-gallon gas jug?

25 A. Five gallons

1 Q. Five gallons.

2 A. Mm-hmm.

3 Q. I don't know if you can touch base on any differences in the
4 machinery between the Vision, which we toured yesterday and then
5 the Conception just so we have a better understanding. Was there
6 a, location-wise, and we were talking about yesterday about hot
7 water heaters or differences in number of generators or engines?
8 Could you explain that?

9 A. Okay. The Vision has different main engines. They're
10 Detroit's, but they are a different model, located in the same, the
11 same location. The Vision has two generators, one on the port and
12 starboard.

13 The Conception has one generator on the port side. They both
14 have two additional air compressors down below. On the Vision,
15 there's one on the port and one on the starboard. Where on the
16 Conception, both were located on the starboard side.

17 They both had hot water heaters down in the engine room. The
18 Vision has one additional hot water heater up in the shower
19 compartment, forward of the bunkroom. Both boats have an
20 identical nitrox generator located on the starboard side, in the
21 lazarette.

22 The fire suppression system, the bottles located on the
23 Conception were on the starboard side against the forward bulkhead
24 in the lazarette. And on the Vision, they were, as you saw last
25 night, they are located on the port side of the engine room.

1 Q. Thank you. Were you aware of any issues with the
2 Conception's generator overheating?

3 A. No. It was fairly new, that generator.

4 Q. Do you know the voltages of the galley equipment?

5 A. 220, some are single, and some are three-phase.

6 Q. You mentioned, sir, that you weren't aware of any issues with
7 any of the machinery onboard the vessel?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Any electrical equipment?

10 A. No.

11 Q. If there was an issue with anything onboard, how would that
12 information be relayed to you?

13 A. Generally, it would be through the captain. Sometimes the
14 captains contact contractors or help to come in if it's something
15 beyond their scope of knowledge.

16 Q. Are you in that chain? Is there an email sent to you or do
17 they call you? How do they normally say, tell you that there's an
18 issue?

19 A. If they need my additional help, they will generally call me.
20 It's faster. They don't have access to email out at sea. We have
21 a sat phone onboard.

22 Q. Okay. You had mentioned earlier that you had an electrician
23 come in to perform some of the maintenance?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What was the name of that electrician? Do you remember?

1 A. His name is Bert Kissenbeck (ph.).

2 Q. And does he have a company?

3 A. No. He's a retired, he's been in electrical for numerous
4 years. I don't know how many years.

5 Q. Local here?

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. You mentioned earlier that the captain trains all the crew
8 members onboard?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Who performs your maintenance of the vessel, engine --
11 machinery components? Sorry. Who performs the maintenance for
12 that? Fuel filter changes, oil changes on the main engines and
13 generators?

14 A. Captain and crew.

15 Q. Captain and crew?

16 A. Yeah.

17 Q. So, he conducts their training to complete that work as well,
18 so he oversees all of that?

19 A. Yeah. It usually, they do it. You know, they lend a helping
20 hand.

21 Q. Okay. How would he deal -- are you aware of how he would
22 record that maintenance being completed?

23 A. There's an engine room log that it's recorded in.

24 Q. And that's all maintained on the vessel?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Do you have any backups for this in your office?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Were you aware of any engine room or machinery rounds being
4 conducted throughout the vessel's journey?

5 A. Well as a general rule of thumb, they conduct rounds
6 constantly and monitor the engine room.

7 Q. Okay. For a major engine overhaul, would you contract a
8 third party? Before when you had the engine repowered, you had
9 the shipyard do it. But is there a local mechanic that performs
10 any work on your vessels?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Who was that?

13 A. Well there's a couple of different mechanics. The person
14 that overhauled the engines, name's Bruce McConnell (ph.). And
15 routine maintenance that's beyond our scope will be AAA Marine
16 from Ventura.

17 Q. When this major maintenance is done, who do you contact in
18 the Coast Guard? Do you contact the Coast Guard?

19 A. When major work is done?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. No.

22 Q. How about, is your underwriter, your insurer made aware of
23 any major modifications, overhauls to your main engines?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Just a couple more questions here. Sir, how, what was the

1 fuel capacity of that boat?

2 A. 1,600.

3 Q. Was it full at the time of the fire, or what was it?

4 A. It was, as I understood, the vessel filled up prior to that
5 trip and I don't think there was a lot of travel. So, we're,
6 according to the captain, it sounds like he thinks it was probably
7 around 1,400 gallons onboard.

8 Q. Okay, almost full. Were you aware of any other fuel sources?

9 I know we talked about earlier the fuel tank on the stern. Were
10 there oxygen tanks that were used in diving that were onboard?

11 A. Yes. I think I understood that there were some people that
12 were diving rebreathers and they require bringing 100 percent
13 oxygen onboard. And those tanks were located on the back deck
14 with the other scuba tanks, all the way aft.

15 Q. Just to clarify, the barbeque grill was electric and there
16 was no propane onboard?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Just one more question about the fire detection there in the
19 galley. I noticed there was a, on the Vision yesterday when we
20 were looking, and there's a junction box with an indication light
21 and a toggle switch. Do you know what that toggle switch was for?
22 Was it to shut off the alarm or shut off the actual sensing unit?

23 A. I don't, I don't remember a toggle switch.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. I don't think there's a way to turn that off.

1 Q. Okay. And then the bridge, there was a panel or indicating
2 where a fire may be, where the sensors are located throughout the
3 vessel with a light indication. There was also an on/off toggle
4 on that. Do you know what that was for?

5 A. That on/off toggle is old, and it was, that toggle only
6 turned off the transmission oil pressure, as you would go to
7 maneuver the vessel and take it in and out of gear, the pressure
8 would drop. So that was a bypass for that only.

9 Q. So that toggle was actually, is located on the same panel as
10 the fire detection system.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. But it wasn't for that?

13 A. No.

14 Q. It was for something else?

15 A. It was independent. Yeah. It was a sole purpose toggle.

16 MR. HENDERSON: Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

17 MR. FRITZLER: Okay.

18 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Moving on.

19 MR. [REDACTED] This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I'm with the Coast
20 Guard Investigations National Center of Expertise. Only got a
21 couple of questions for you, sir.

22 BY MR. [REDACTED]

23 Q. You said that most of the maintenance was done onboard and
24 the logs were in the engine room. What about the spare parts,
25 like the purchase orders for the spare parts and everything?

1 A. That would be located at our office.

2 Q. Okay. Also, when you talked about construction of the
3 vessel, you stated that it was fiberglass over the exterior?

4 A. Yes. It's what they call a plywood, or glass over ply, is
5 how they, I think it's on our COI.

6 Q. Okay. So, it's not sandwiched construction.

7 A. No.

8 Q. So, there's fiberglass on the interior?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Okay. All right. And last question. Do you hold a license?

11 A. Yes, I d.

12 Q. Okay. And what is it?

13 A. 100-ton masters.

14 Q. And are you current?

15 A. I am but I'm, was supposed to get my renewal paper in the
16 mail today. So, I'm going to be a little delayed, I think.

17 MR. [REDACTED] All right. Thank you.

18 MR. EHLERS: Mr. Young, do you have any questions?

19 MR. YOUNG: I'd like to go around the room one more time and
20 then I'll ask some.

21 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Commander [REDACTED] Mr. [REDACTED]

22 MR. [REDACTED] No questions.

23 MR. EHLERS: Okay. I've got just a couple of follow up
24 questions for you.

25 BY MR. EHLERS:

1 Q. Can you give a sense of the pace of operations of the
2 Conception? In other words, did it go out weekly? Did it go out
3 monthly? For how long, that kind of thing?

4 A. It's kind of a seasonal business. So, around this time of
5 year it's common that the vessel is going out daily, generally on
6 multi-day trips. Occasionally a one-day trip. We do, our average
7 trip is probably a 3-day trip and we do trips, that vessel just
8 got back from a 6-day trip, within a couple weeks. So, there was
9 some longer.

10 Q. Okay. What is the range of operations? In other words, how
11 far does it operate? Is it all just in the Channel Islands or can
12 you elaborate?

13 A. Yeah. We pretty much were from Monterey to the Mexican
14 border coastwise. And then all eight Channel Islands and
15 including Cortez Banks.

16 Q. Okay. In any of the previous voyages that the vessel took,
17 were there any issues brought to your attention with the vessel?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. All right. When passengers board the vessel, divers
20 board the vessel, are they given a safety briefing?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And when is that safety briefing conducted? Is it conducted
23 before the vessel gets underway, afterwards? Like when?

24 A. I would have to refer that to the captain. I don't really
25 know.

1 Q. Okay. All right. You mentioned the Nitrox generator. Is
2 Nitrox ever stored onboard?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Okay. It just goes from the generator directly to the
5 diver's tanks. Is that correct?

6 A. Well it's -- what it does is it supplies the nitrox to the
7 high-pressure compressor that then compresses it into the tank.

8 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. That's all I have.

9 MR. MUISE: I just have a couple again about life jackets.
10 Again, this is Marcel Muise, NTSB.

11 BY MR. MUISE:

12 Q. I saw two different types of life jackets last night --

13 A. Mm-hmm.

14 Q. -- on the Vision. Was that the same on the Conception or
15 were they all same?

16 A. I can't answer that. You'd have to ask the captain if there
17 were any changes. You mean type 1 or type 2?

18 Q. Type 1s.

19 A. Yeah. I don't know.

20 Q. There were two different models.

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay. Regarding the escape hatch, is that original to the,
23 the escape hatch from the berthing area, was that original design?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Was that, did that come from the naval architect or who

1 designed that?

2 A. I would assume so.

3 Q. Is there, are you familiar with the standard it was designed
4 to?

5 A. You know, when the vessels -- you know, that's a good
6 question. You know, I mean we had actual boat builders. We had a
7 say in layout and design of, you know, size of vessel, what have
8 you. But when it came to that, that was just of, you know, part
9 of the building process and inspected during the construction.

10 Q. Was the architect at the boatyard that constructed it? Or
11 was it a third party?

12 A. No. No. We really didn't have architects. It's kind of
13 interesting. We had one guy that drew a set of rudimentary plans
14 for the Coast Guard that were stamped. And then it was just built
15 onsite and inspected during construction.

16 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thank you.

17 LT [REDACTED] Just a couple. Once again, this is LT [REDACTED]
18 [REDACTED] from the Coast Guard National Investigations of Expertise,
19 Center of Expertise.

20 BY LT [REDACTED]

21 Q. Are there certain types of items that are not allowed on
22 board like from passengers? Like can they, can they, are there
23 certain things that they cannot, can't bring on board your
24 vessels?

25 A. Marijuana.

1 Q. Anything, for instance, like as far as something that might
2 be a fire hazard, like fireworks? Like you're having a party,
3 like, can, are they allowed to bring fireworks, candles, anything
4 of that nature on board?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay. And is that, how is that communicated to passengers?
7 Before boarding?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And are, do you do that or does that master?

10 A. The master does.

11 LT [REDACTED] Okay. That's all I had. Thank you.

12 LT [REDACTED] Just a couple more questions from me. This
13 is LT [REDACTED] again, with Coast Guard MSD Santa Barbara.

14 BY LT [REDACTED]

15 Q. So, you mentioned that the vessel had just returned from a 6-
16 day trip previous to this. Is that correct?

17 A. Sometime before this trip.

18 Q. Okay. How long was this trip?

19 A. This trip was scheduled to be 3 days.

20 Q. Three days. Okay. And was it the same crew on both trips?

21 A. I can't answer that.

22 LT [REDACTED] Okay. That's all I have. Thank you.

23 MR. EHLERS: Captain [REDACTED]

24 BY CAPT. [REDACTED]

25 Q. Yes. One quick follow up question, or maybe two. I know we

1 discussed this last night, but the skiff on the back.

2 A. Mm-hmm.

3 Q. You said that is electric hydraulic, so you need to have
4 electricity running in order to operate the hydraulics back there.
5 Was that correct?

6 A. That's correct.

7 Q. And by any chance, are you familiar with, I guess once people
8 go to bed, what's the operations as far as, is there somebody that
9 does a final walk through as far as the crew goes of that
10 galley/saloon area before going to bed? Is there any, or is it
11 pretty much a free for all?

12 A. No. I mean the, you know, you'd have to refer to the captain
13 on how he conducts it, but generally I mean there, somebody always
14 does a walk through. Things have to be cleaned.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So, when passengers wake up in the morning that it's fresh
17 and clean, so.

18 Q. Okay. Do you have, have you ever had issues with passengers
19 coming up after everybody goes to bed, or is it generally people
20 stay down in the sleeping areas until it's time for --

21 A. Oh, you know, there's insomniac all over the place. So yeah.

22 CAPT. SNODGRASS: Okay. Okay. Thanks.

23 MR. HENDERSON: Detective Henderson with the Sheriff's
24 Department. No questions.

25 MR. BARNUM: Bart Barnum, NTSB again.

1 BY MR. BARNUM:

2 Q. You weren't aware of any issues with the fire pumps you had
3 on board the vessel?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Where is the location of the fire stations on the Conception?

6 A. They're located port and starboard on the exterior of the
7 cabin aft.

8 Q. And those were, how often were those tested, pressured up?

9 A. Annually.

10 Q. Just annually?

11 A. Yeah, for the inspections.

12 Q. Okay. What was the policy onboard for alcohol?

13 A. As far as passengers or crew?

14 Q. Passengers, well both?

15 A. Well zero tolerance for crew.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. And passengers are free to bring whatever they want.

18 Q. So it wasn't, it was brought by passengers, not supplied?

19 A. Yeah. We don't supply it.

20 MR. BARNUM: Okay. Thank you.

21 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] NCOE. No questions.

22 MR. EHLERS: Okay.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No questions.

24 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Brian?

25 MR. YOUNG: Brian Young with the NTSB. Thank you for your

1 time.

2 BY MR. YOUNG:

3 Q. I know you said there's about 10 people that work shore side.
4 Can you just explain their role in the company and how they
5 support you as the owner as well as the vessels? What their
6 functions are, what kind of shoreside support your company offers
7 the vessels?

8 A. Okay. We have a general manager at the sea landing that
9 oversees the whole shoreside facility. We have an assistant
10 manager. We have clerks that handle phone calls, take
11 reservations.

12 And we have some marketing efforts going on up there as well.
13 And we have a subcontractor that has a space for selling and
14 renting dive equipment. We also have subcontracts with a jet ski
15 operation there as well as kayaking and stand up paddle boards.

16 Q. And we were fortunate to visit the sister vessel yesterday.
17 Could you please describe for the record the means of escape from
18 the bunk area and if there was any sort of obstructions on ability
19 to close or lock any doors or hatches?

20 A. Okay. As like we noted on the sister vessel, the
21 configuration was very similar where you access the bunkroom
22 forward in the salon on the starboard side. The escape hatch is
23 aft of the bunkroom going out through the open doorway from the
24 salon approximately 6 feet from that doorway is the escape hatch.

25 Q. About how far is the escape hatch from the forward ladder

1 well into the lower space, approximately?

2 A. Approximately 20 to, probably 25 feet.

3 Q. And how would the passengers be made aware of this escape
4 hatch? Can you discuss that?

5 A. There's, there's placards in the bunks. Or there's a, or
6 there's a, you know, there's escape signs.

7 Q. Would that be below deck and above deck as well?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. As passengers would come up the ladder, well from the bunk
10 station just before, to what is the galley. Understand that it's
11 about 3 o'clock in the morning. What galley equipment may have
12 been energized at that time? Would anybody be preparing breakfast
13 for a morning dive?

14 A. No.

15 Q. Would there be a coffee machine on at all times?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Is that something regularly secured at the end of the
18 evening?

19 A. Yeah. That, the coffee machine is one of those drip-type
20 machines, where you make a pot, put into a hotpot and then the
21 machine shuts down. So, it's on and off. It takes under 10
22 minutes to brew a pot of coffee and then it's off.

23 Q. And on a dive trip like this, this may be a question for the
24 crew, but is there a standard start time that everybody wakes up
25 and begins their day?

1 A. Yeah. A good question for the crew. Generally, 7 a.m. is
2 when the passengers start waking up.

3 Q. Okay. Looking at the witness statements, most of the crew,
4 all the crew statements we received, said that crew was up on the
5 upper deck where the bridge was or the wheelhouse, maybe referred
6 to as the sundeck?

7 A. The sundeck is aft of the wheelhouse.

8 Q. Okay. And for that crew to access the next deck down, what,
9 is there, what are the ways for them to leave the wheelhouse and
10 get to the deck below? Is there an interior ladder well, or do
11 they have to go outside?

12 A. They have to go outside.

13 Q. And then if they come outside, they have to head aft on the
14 sundeck?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. And then go down below?

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. If there was a fire in the galley and the smoke detector
19 detected it above the range, can you estimate who may be able to
20 hear it based on your previous experience? Is it just something
21 local or can you hear that throughout the vessel?

22 A. It is a really loud audible device. And we could show you on
23 the sister vessel.

24 Q. Okay. If the smoke detectors were to go off in the bunk area
25 at any time, how would they be heard?

1 A. By, I would imagine by everybody downstairs.

2 Q. Do you think they could be heard on the bridge?

3 A. That I don't know. I don't know.

4 Q. And those detectors, are they similar to a device that could
5 be purchased at a home improvement store?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. Okay. And they are battery powered with or electrically
8 powered with battery backup?

9 A. Yes. On the Conception that was the case. We did notice
10 that one of the detectors last night was battery, not electrical.

11 Q. In addition to the annual Coast Guard safety inspection, does
12 the crew perform any checks of the smoke detectors throughout the
13 vessel that you're aware of?

14 A. As I understand, yes.

15 Q. And on what type of frequency?

16 A. That I can't answer. I just know that the captain did say
17 that he just recently had some work performed on the vessel, on
18 the AC unit where a guy was soldering and it was setting off the
19 alarms, so he had to unplug them, so they could finish the work
20 and then he plugged them back in, put fresh batteries in them and
21 tested them. And that was within a month.

22 Q. Okay. If an alarm had gone off as a smoke or fire alarm in
23 the engine room, how would the crew be made aware of that?

24 A. That one goes to the bridge.

25 Q. So, if the smoke detector had been activated in the engine

1 room, anybody on the bridge would hear it. What about the rooms
2 behind it? Would you think it's loud enough that it's possible
3 that crew could hear it on that deck?

4 A. You talking about down below or on the sundeck?

5 Q. Down.

6 A. Passengers down below, I don't think would be able to hear
7 the alarm up in the wheelhouse.

8 Q. What about the crew on the, on the bridge deck?

9 A. Oh, yeah. They would, they would hear it, yeah.

10 Q. We estimated, or you estimated it was about 1,400 gallons of
11 fuel aboard. Where was the location of the fuel tanks on the
12 Conception?

13 A. They are port and starboard side of the engine room outboard
14 of the main engines. They attach to the forward bulkhead and then
15 go about halfway back into the engine room, three-quarters of the
16 way.

17 Q. At the time of the incident, would it be correct to say that
18 the vessel was anchored?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. It was?

21 A. As I understood.

22 Q. Would you know if they anchored with one or two anchors?

23 A. I believe they had two anchors out.

24 Q. And during the time that the vessels are anchored, is it
25 standard for the main engines to be secured?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So, what equipment would be running in the engine room?

3 A. A generator.

4 Q. Oh, a generator? Are air compressors kicking on and off or
5 are they secured through the night?

6 A. They're secured. They're only on an as needed basis.

7 Q. In addition to the fire pump and fire hoses that are located
8 port and starboard and the fixed system in the engine room, what
9 other fire fighting equipment is aboard, was aboard the
10 Conception?

11 A. We have saltwater wash down hoses located on the bow, on the
12 starboard side aft of the cabin and at the back deck.

13 Q. Okay. And extinguishers?

14 A. Engine room, galley, bunkroom, shower room. It's -- you
15 know, yeah.

16 Q. Did you receive any sort of phone calls or any notification
17 from the ship at any time, (indiscernible) reporting any concerns
18 or issues to you?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Nothing during that voyage?

21 A. No.

22 Q. And if -- I think this may have been asked but just to
23 clarify, if there were any concerns, what means of communication
24 does the vessel have to report anything to your company?

25 A. Sat phone.

1 Q. And with a crew of six aboard, is it standard that the entire
2 crew lives, sleeps in the upper deck, on the bridge deck or does
3 some of the crew sleep down in the passenger department?

4 A. We have one crewman that sleeps down below.

5 Q. And is there a reason for that or --

6 A. Space and presence.

7 Q. Okay. So, if the passengers needed somebody from the crew,
8 that the crew member's available for them to communicate with
9 during the night?

10 A. Correct.

11 Q. And do you know if the crew in that passenger compartment is
12 able to communicate with the bridge via walkie-talkie or --

13 A. No.

14 Q. Okay. It would just be walking up and contacting them?

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. And can you recall what may have been the last bit of
17 maintenance, whether it's routine or unscheduled that may have
18 been done aboard that vessel prior to the fire?

19 A. No. I'm not aware. That would be up to the master.

20 Q. Okay. So, if something, say something did break, he would
21 call a vendor directly and have them come out to vessel?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And you would get the bill, if anything or the report for
24 something?

25 A. Right.

1 Q. Okay. And do you keep maintenance and service reports in
2 your shoreside office?

3 A. No. I just keep receipts for our accounts payable.

4 Q. Okay. Do you know if there had been any vendors coming up to
5 the vessel in the last week or so?

6 A. Not in the last week. As I mentioned, previously the air
7 conditioner was worked on probably a month ago. That's the last
8 major expenditure that I saw.

9 Q. Okay. And for the compressor to be under the, under the
10 sleeping quarters deck in the bilge, is the compressor and
11 evaporated coil and distribution fan all located in a single
12 packaged unit?

13 A. It -- yes.

14 Q. And is it air cooled or water cooled?

15 A. It is water cooled.

16 Q. Is that event from the saltwater system from the engine room
17 --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Distributing it throughout?

20 A. Mm-hmm.

21 Q. So, it's an entire closed package that everything is enclosed
22 in a unit under the deck. Is that correct?

23 A. It's not really in a unit. It's kind of open. The
24 components are all close to one another but it's not in a box.
25 It's kind of on a platform open.

1 Q. Okay. And what was the issue with that AC system.

2 A. I think the, if I believe the coil, the saltwater coil was
3 just starting to show signs of corrosion.

4 Q. Okay. So that would have been a possible brazing repair --

5 A. Correct.

6 Q. -- to --

7 A. That's why the soldering and that's why he had to unplug the
8 -- yes.

9 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Okay. Thank you for your time.

10 MR. FRITZLER: Sure.

11 MR. EHLERS: I just have one more follow up question. Well,
12 two related questions.

13 BY MR. EHLERS:

14 Q. When we were on board the Vision yesterday, I believe down in
15 the lazarette I saw a freezer box. Was that for game? Is that
16 correct?

17 A. Mm-hmm.

18 Q. Did the Conception have the same setup?

19 A. Yeah. Yeah. Basically, the same.

20 Q. Is that a commercial freezer box?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. And was that a regular power? In other words, was
23 that 120 volt or --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Yep. Okay. All right. Any idea of the age of that unit?

1 A. No.

2 MR. EHLERS: Okay. All right. I have no further questions.

3 Thank you.

4 LT [REDACTED] I actually do have one more. This is Lieutenant
5 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard Investigations National Center
6 of Expertise. During your time of owning the vessel, have you
7 ever been made aware of any other fires onboard the Conception,
8 even small?

9 MR. FRITZLER: No.

10 LT [REDACTED] Have you ever had to replace a fire extinguisher
11 because it had been discharged?

12 MR. FRITZLER: I can't answer that. I don't know.

13 LT [REDACTED] Okay. That's all. Thank you very much.
14 Nothing further, thank you.

15 MR. EHLERS: Bart?

16 MR. BARNUM: Yes. Mr. Fritzler, just Bart Barnum, NTSB, just
17 a few questions. Do you happen to know the material of the fuel
18 tanks, what they were made of?

19 MR. FRITZLER: Steel.

20 MR. BARNUM: Steel fuel tanks. Okay. And to your knowledge,
21 while the vessel's anchored, has two anchors out, is the crew all
22 sleeping at night?

23 MR. FRITZLER: You would have to refer to the captain about
24 that.

25 MR. BARNUM: Okay.

1 MR. EHLERS: Mr. [REDACTED] Anyone else?

2 MR. YOUNG: Brian Young with the NTSB. Are any of the crew
3 members trained to use fire extinguishers?

4 MR. FRITZLER: Yes.

5 MR. YOUNG: How is that done?

6 MR. FRITZLER: Through the, through the master. He conducts
7 it, that training.

8 MR. YOUNG: Okay. And is that on a frequent basis or do you
9 know or are aware of how frequently or --

10 MR. FRITZLER: I'm not aware.

11 MR. YOUNG: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. EHLERS: Okay. Are there any other questions? Okay.

13 Mr. Fritzler, I know that this is difficult, as you've mentioned
14 in the situation. And knowing that, I very much appreciate your
15 openness in sharing as much information as you have. And I thank
16 you for that.

17 MR. FRITZLER: Thank you.

18 MR. EHLERS: At this time, we'll conclude the interview. It
19 is now about 0923.

20 (Whereupon, at 9:23 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

21

22

23

24

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE AND SINKING OF THE CONCEPTION
WITH LOSS OF LIFE NEAR
SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, CALIFORNIA
SEPTEMBER 2, 2019
Interview of Glen Fritzler

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19MM047

PLACE:

DATE: September 5, 2019

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.


Romona Phillips
Transcriber