

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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FIRE AND SINKING OF THE *CONCEPTION*
WITH LOSS OF LIFE NEAR
SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, CALIFORNIA,
SEPTEMBER 2, 2019

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Accident No.: DCA19MM047

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Interview of: USCG Station Channel Islands Harbor
Personnel

Coast Guard Station Channel Islands
Harbor
Oxnard, California

Friday,
September 6, 2019

APPEARANCES:

MARCEL MUISE, Marine Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

JEFF BRAY, Attorney
(On behalf of the USCG personnel)

USCG Station Channel Islands Harbor Personnel:

BM3 [REDACTED]
BMC [REDACTED]
BM2 [REDACTED]
BM1 [REDACTED]

I N T E R V I E W

(8:28 a.m.)

1
2
3 MR. MUISE: This is Marcel Muise with the National
4 Transportation Safety Board. We're at Coast Guard Station Channel
5 Islands Harbor investigating the fire on the *Conception*. I'm here
6 with some of the boat crew from that evening. If you guys could
7 introduce yourselves. Let's just go from it that way.

8 BM3 [REDACTED] BM3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I've been here at
9 the Station for 2 years, qualified boat crew, boarding team
10 member, coxswain, pursuit boarding team member, pursuit boat crew
11 member on all the assets, and also officer of the day.

12 MR. MUISE: Okay. Chief?

13 BMC [REDACTED] I'm BMC [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I am the Executive
14 Petty Officer here at Coast Guard Station Channel Islands. This
15 October, I've been in the Coast Guard for 15 years. I've been
16 here at Station Channel Islands since June of 2019. Currently
17 pursuing recertifications on the asset platforms.

18 BM2 [REDACTED] BM2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Been in the Coast
19 Guard for just over 8 years. I was stationed here at Channel
20 Islands as a non-rate from '11 to '13, July to July, and then I've
21 been back since August of 2016. I am qualified as a pursuit
22 coxswain on all the platforms; officer of the day.

23 MR. MUISE: BM1?

24 BM1 [REDACTED] BM1 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I am the Operations Petty
25 Officer here at Station Channel Islands. Been in the Coast Guard

1 12 years. I currently hold pursuit coxswain on both platforms,
2 officer of the day, and command duty officer.

3 MR. MUISE: Okay. Thanks.

4 INTERVIEW OF CREW MEMBERS

5 MR. MUISE: Chief, why I don't I just start with you. Can
6 you describe what you have for assets here?

7 BMC [REDACTED] Sure. Absolutely. We have a 45-foot RB-M,
8 response boat - medium; we have two of those. We have a 29-foot
9 RB-S II, second generation; we have one of those. And that's it
10 for assets here.

11 MR. MUISE: Can you describe your AOR for me a little bit?
12 How big is your AOR?

13 BMC [REDACTED] Sure. I'm going to let (indiscernible) --

14 MR. MUISE: Okay. Go ahead. Absolutely, yeah.

15 BMC [REDACTED] -- here give a rundown for this AOR.

16 MR. MUISE: BM1 [REDACTED]

17 BM1 [REDACTED] So we have 04 AOR points that we hit semi-
18 annually. They are: Ventura Harbor, we have to go there once
19 during the day and once at night, minimum; Port Hueneme, day and
20 night; circumnavigate Santa Cruise Island, day and night; and
21 Santa Barbara Harbor, day and night.

22 MR. MUISE: And correct me if I'm wrong, there's major
23 shipping lanes that run between here and Santa Cruz? Okay.
24 Cruise ships and containerships --

25 BM1 [REDACTED] Yes. Through the Santa Barbara Channel.

1 MR. MUISE: Okay. All right. Who was the lead coxswain that
2 night?

3 BMC [REDACTED] So we have two boat crews. This is BMC [REDACTED]
4 We have two boat crews, and these were our two coxswains,
5 BM2 [REDACTED] BM3 [REDACTED] They were in control of both of
6 those platforms that went out.

7 MR. MUISE: Was that both the RB-Ms?

8 BMC [REDACTED] Both of the 45-foot RB-Ms that go out for this.

9 MR. MUISE: Okay. Roger. One of you guys want to just to
10 tell me -- just tell me the story.

11 BM2 [REDACTED] I'll -- BM2 [REDACTED] I'll take that.
12 I was -- I have the only OOD, officer of the day, phone. I was
13 not the officer of the day. BM3 [REDACTED] was, but since I have
14 the landline phone that rings at night in my room, I received a
15 call from Sector Los Angeles Command Center asking us to respond
16 to what was perceived as a heart attack, asked us to get underway.
17 It was on the north side of Santa Cruz Island, and asked us to get
18 up and respond and that we would get the position passed as we
19 were en route, which is a pretty standard practice, as I'm
20 sleeping, I don't have a notepad to start writing down
21 coordinates. I'd rather get up, get everyone up, and then get a
22 position.

23 I made a pipe to get the whole crew up. I made a pipe with
24 regards to "Now SAR, SAR, SAR. We have a potential heart attack,
25 north side of Channel Islands, duty crew, late operations."

1 I got dressed. We met in operations. BM3 and myself were
2 discussing our response posture. We have a MOU with Ventura
3 County Fire Department to have one of their medic engines, which
4 is a fire truck with a paramedic on board and advanced life
5 support equipment, ALS equipment. We have a Ventura County fire
6 radio that has all of their dispatch command and tactical
7 frequencies on it, so we have two of those radios and we're also
8 trained to use those. It provides a direct link straight to the
9 fire communications center to make any requests and opens that
10 line of communication rather than going through the 911 system.

11 We determined that it would be prudent to get medics out
12 there for a medical case. I took the fire radio and requested a
13 response from a Ventura County medic engine. The closest station
14 is Medic Engine 53, out of Station 53, which is on the other side
15 of the Navy Base. They typically, during the day, have a 7-minute
16 response time. Since it was night and they had to wake up, we
17 figured that they were going to be more in the 10 to 15-minute
18 response time frame. So that call went out at about 3:28, 3:27,
19 3:28. I think the call went at 3:27. They were dispatched at
20 3:28.

21 In addition, their standard response posture for us is they
22 dispatched that medic engine along with a battalion chief. The
23 battalion chief comes out of Rio, which is just north of the 101
24 near the collection. So that battalion chief's going to have a
25 little bit longer response time, but he's just there to provide a

1 line of communication between our officer of the day, the fire
2 communications center, and the response medic engine.

3 Shortly after we had got them en route, we -- as we were
4 standing in operations, we heard a mayday call over Channel 16,
5 which was what we have now learned to be the captain saying, "I
6 have a fire on my boat. There's people trapped. We need help."
7 BM3 [REDACTED] and I looked at each other, and look of shock,
8 because now we're transitioning from a medical case to a fire
9 case.

10 Knowing that we already had the firefighters en route, we
11 elected to redistribute our crew members, and as the OD, he passed
12 off the OD to a break-in OD, notified our CDO, and both of us
13 created a boat crews so that we could actually respond two assets.
14 Because knowing that the captain said over the radio he had in the
15 neighborhood of 30 people trapped, if all of those people were
16 able to get off and be in the water, one 45 isn't allowed to
17 handle all of that. We can obviously adjust that for search and
18 rescue, but because we could make two boat crews, get two assets
19 out there, more manpower, that's what we elected to do.

20 We decided that he would take the 45643. I would take 45739.
21 He would get underway as soon as he could to start heading out and
22 I would wait until the fire department got there and then take
23 them on my boat. So I went with a minimum crew of three. He went
24 with our, typically, standard crew of four.

25 As soon as we got down and got the boat started and I think

1 he left right in the -- I can't remember the exact time -- he left
2 about 7 to 10 minutes before I did.

3 As soon as the fire department got here, I climbed up in the
4 window of the fire captain's door and said, hey, Captain, we're
5 transitioning from a medical case to a fire. We actually have a
6 boat on fire with 30 people trapped. He said, okay, do we need to
7 man the fireboat?" There's a joint fireboat, it's called Boat
8 15 --

9 MR. MUISE: That's it right here.

10 BM2 [REDACTED] The one right here. Correct.

11 MR. MUISE: Thank you.

12 BM2 [REDACTED] Jointly owned by the Harbor Patrol and the
13 Fire Department. So the Harbor Patrol operates it, drives it, and
14 a fire engine crew mans the pump and the firefighting. I said, I
15 would rather take you out right now, the thinking being that if we
16 have people in the water, I know that boat fires typically spread
17 very fast and I was more concerned about getting people out of the
18 water and treating them medically.

19 He radioed to a communications center to get a second engine
20 company to come down and man that fireboat. So then we got all of
21 the medical equipment plus their turnouts plus extra oxygen
22 bottles, all of their firefighting gear, also, in addition to
23 medical gear onto my boat, and I left.

24 MR. MUISE: Okay. The fireboat followed behind, in that
25 case, then, with a different engine crew?

1 BM2 [REDACTED] They dispatched engine 54, I believe, which
2 comes out of Thousand Oaks -- I'm sorry -- out of Camarillo.

3 MR. MUISE: Does that fireboat have a dedicated crew or does
4 any engine can take it and go or --

5 BM2 [REDACTED] Any engine, any county engine can take it.
6 So 53 is the typical response to that because they're the closest,
7 and then I would assume that Station 54 is the next closest.

8 BMC [REDACTED] Yeah, the County Fire will be able to kind of
9 probably answer more of those questions.

10 MR. MUISE: I'll talk to them later this week.

11 BMC [REDACTED] Yeah, who mans it and exactly who, you know,
12 who's responsible for getting those underway. But from the Coast
13 Guard account, you know, the lead coxswain in the section making
14 the determination we're going to send both of our boats,
15 transitioning from a heart attack to a fire, that's kind of where
16 we stood with that. We're going to send both assets that we could
17 out to that.

18 MR. MUISE: So was the heart attack called in the same case
19 or was that a different case going on somewhere?

20 BM2 [REDACTED] My understanding in talking with the Sector
21 LA Command Center is that the initial call they classified as a
22 heart attack because the person said I'm having trouble breathing
23 and I'm having chest pains.

24 MR. MUISE: Okay.

25 BM2 [REDACTED] And we are assuming that that call was from

1 the boat on fire.

2 BMC [REDACTED] We don't know, though.

3 BM2 [REDACTED] But we don't know.

4 MR. MUISE: Okay.

5 BMC [REDACTED] Our report was a heart attack and then they heard
6 fire over our boat radio.

7 MR. MUISE: Okay. Can you talk to me a little bit about the
8 firefighting capabilities of the 45?

9 BM2 [REDACTED] Firefighting capabilities of the 45. We
10 have a P-6 dewatering pump. It's primarily designed for
11 dewatering, supplies -- can pump a boat -- dewater a boat at 250
12 gallons per minute. On the 45 we also have a 50-foot firefighting
13 hose with a vary nozzle that can attach to the output side of that
14 dewatering pump. And then we have a standpipe connection that
15 goes to the sea chest and a connection point on the aft of the
16 boat along with a 6-foot hard hose so that we can turn the
17 dewatering pump into a small firefighting pump.

18 MR. MUISE: What's the current Coast Guard policy on marine
19 firefighting for Coast Guard Stations?

20 BM2 [REDACTED] The current policy would come out of
21 Chapter 4 of the SAR Addendum, so I'd reference you to that.

22 MR. MUISE: Are you guys allowed to do firefighting, though?

23 BM2 [REDACTED] In the early stages of a fire to save a
24 life and prevent property loss, basically, we can put, as we say,
25 wet stuff on hot stuff to try and save lives.

1 MR. MUISE: Okay. How about --

2 BM2 [REDACTED] Except under the direction of a fire
3 officer, then we can actually participate in firefighting
4 activities.

5 MR. MUISE: Okay. In this case you had a battalion chief
6 with you and --

7 BM2 [REDACTED] I had a fire captain who, per the NFPA,
8 fills that role of a fire officer.

9 MR. MUISE: Did the battalion chief make it before you left?

10 BM2 [REDACTED] No, he did not.

11 MR. MUISE: Okay.

12 BM2 [REDACTED] But even if he had, he would not respond
13 with the crew. His job is to stay back, sort of, as a command and
14 control position.

15 MR. MUISE: Good. How about EMS? What's the EMS capability
16 of a standard 45-footer?

17 BM2 [REDACTED] It relies on the first aid training of the
18 boat crew. We have very -- we have some first aid training but we
19 don't practice it in -- it's one of our missions but we don't do
20 it every day.

21 MR. MUISE: You don't have an EMT on each boat crew?

22 BM2 [REDACTED] We do not. We happened to have an EMT at
23 the station, but there is no requirement to have that and that EMT
24 was not here.

25 MR. MUISE: Okay. So you're on the scene. What did you find

1 when you got out there?

2 BM2 [REDACTED] I'll refer to BM3. He was first on scene.

3 BM3 [REDACTED] Being the first boat on scene, as we were
4 rolling up to the scene -- it's BM3 by the way -- saw from even 10
5 miles out, the orange of the fire. As we got closer, we heard
6 that the boat was fully engulfed and that the crew of the
7 *Conception*, they still had two members on their dinghy searching
8 the water around the vessel for survivors.

9 As we came closer, we saw that dinghy as well, and the vessel
10 completely engulfed. I directed my crew to start setting up the
11 P-6 pump, and while we searched around the vessel for any
12 potential persons in the water, survivors who might have escaped,
13 anything like that. Couldn't find anyone.

14 Once they had the pump set up, started spraying water on the
15 boat hoping that maybe possibly they could do something or -- put
16 out the fire enough to get somebody out or that might, if anybody
17 was still able to move on the boat, that they might realize we
18 were there, just to, hopefully, save any lives. But --

19 MR. MUISE: Was the skiff doing search patterns when you got
20 out there?

21 BM3 [REDACTED] Search patterns, in a way. They were just
22 kind of motoring around the vessel looking.

23 MR. MUISE: At this point the boat's fully engulfed or can
24 you tell is it one side worse than the other or --

25 BM3 [REDACTED] Every part of that boat was on fire.

1 MR. MUISE: Okay.

2 BMC [REDACTED] BM2, anything to add?

3 BM2 [REDACTED] We arrived about 2 to 4 minutes after BM3's
4 boat did. I obviously had the fire captain on board. We had
5 briefed as we were going out that, no matter what, I still wanted
6 to try and set up our pump for firefighting capability to get some
7 sort of water onto this fire. As we arrived on scene, the fire
8 captain came up to me and he said, it's my recommendation that we
9 do not fight this fire with our capabilities. We need AFFF. We
10 need a big boat. It's pointless to fight this fire. We need to
11 transition to looking for any survivors that may have jumped off
12 the boat.

13 MR. MUISE: Okay. That was my next question, actually. So
14 the fireboat shows up initially?

15 BM2 [REDACTED] The fireboat did show up.

16 BMC [REDACTED] Five to 10 minutes after you get there?

17 BM2 [REDACTED] Something -- I wasn't keeping track of
18 exact times, so any times that I give you on this --

19 MR. MUISE: Sure. That's fine.

20 BM2 [REDACTED] We're going to estimate about 10 minutes.
21 At some point a -- Boat 5 -- Boat 5 out of Santa Barbara?

22 BMC [REDACTED] Santa Barbara --

23 MR. MUISE: (indiscernible) out of Santa Barbara?

24 BM2 [REDACTED] I think it was Boat 3. Santa Barbara
25 Harbor Patrol boat also arrived and it has a fire pump and AFFF on

1 it, also. So it arrived along with the Ventura County fireboat
2 and both of them started working to put the fire out.

3 MR. MUISE: Okay. So at that point you're both doing search
4 patterns; is that right?

5 BM3 [REDACTED] We started on trolling around the boat
6 looking for survivors, shining a searchlight around the area.
7 And --

8 BM2 [REDACTED] About that time --

9 BM3 [REDACTED] -- pretty --

10 BM2 [REDACTED] Go ahead.

11 BM3 [REDACTED] -- pretty soon after started on shoreline
12 searches, and about that time they had to call for the people
13 aboard the *Grape Escape*, with the injured crew member.

14 BM2 [REDACTED] Yes. So right as I arrived on scene, the
15 Coast Guard helo also arrived on scene, the one out of Point Mugu,
16 so a 65. There was also a helo en route from San Diego, which is
17 a 60, has much more endurance, but that transit time, I think, it
18 is about an hour and a half.

19 So right as we arrived on scene, we heard a call on Channel
20 22 from the vessel *Grape Escape* -- so it was originally reported
21 and everyone thought it was *Great Escape* -- called to the helo to
22 say, I have an injured crew member on board my boat; can I get
23 your rescue swimmer who's an EMT down here to get him assessed?

24 I overheard that call, broke in, contacted the *Grape Escape*
25 and said, I have medical personnel on board my boat; please signal

1 to me where you are, because there was multiple boat lights. He
2 blinked his navigation lights for me. I went over, came
3 alongside, and I transferred the Ventura County fire paramedic and
4 their fire engineer, who is certified as an EMT, along with their
5 equipment, to have him check out that injured crew member.
6 Determined that he had a fractured leg.

7 MR. MUISE: Right. Okay. That was my next question, because
8 I talked to them yesterday and I knew somebody got on board, but I
9 wasn't sure who. Okay. And then -- sorry, continue.

10 BM2 [REDACTED] So as he -- as the paramedic assessed the
11 gentleman, we discussed options. He said that he's very stable,
12 took all of his regular blood pressure, all the vitals and said
13 that he's stable. He said, I don't feel comfortable taking him
14 off of that Good Sam boat onto our boat. I don't how we're going
15 to get him into a backboard, a Stokes litter, and transfer him
16 over, and then I don't know how we would get him up to the
17 aircraft.

18 The *Grape Escape* is a Sport Fisher so it has a lot of lines
19 and rods and equipment extending over the back deck where that
20 injured crew member was, so he -- the paramedic made the
21 determination. He said, this gentleman's stable enough to have
22 the *Grape Escape* just return with him and meet EMS at the pier.

23 MR. MUISE: Okay. And how did the search patterns go?

24 BM2 [REDACTED] The general search patterns were BM3 doing
25 searches around the boat and then later he -- I -- around that

1 time I got tasked as the on-scene coordinator, so I tasked him
2 with conducting a shoreline search 1/2 nautical mile east and west
3 of the position, to look along the beach for any survivors. That
4 initial one was negative results. And then as the sun was coming
5 up, tasked him with another one since it started getting light.
6 Did the same thing and also -- this is all later right around
7 6:30, I would estimate, whatever time sunrise was. At that time
8 the MH-60 out of San Diego was on scene. I also tasked them with
9 conducting a shoreline search in about the same area, focusing
10 primary on inside of coves where we couldn't see from the beach,
11 and that also produced negative results for any survivors.

12 MR. MUISE: Okay. How about debris? Did you guys find any
13 debris of significance?

14 BM3 [REDACTED] On one of the shoreline searches we found a
15 light fixture of some kind. Picked it up, completed our search
16 around the area, and nothing else in the water and then continued
17 the shoreline search.

18 MR. MUISE: Can you describe the light for me?

19 BM3 [REDACTED] Approximately a foot to a foot-and-a-half
20 in diameter, sort of a cup-shaped metallic, dark gray or black in
21 color.

22 MR. MUISE: Where did you find this?

23 BM3 [REDACTED] Maybe a couple hundred yards off the
24 *Conception*.

25 MR. MUISE: Okay. Do you know where it is now?

1 BM1 [REDACTED] During the crew swap -- this is BM1. During the
2 crew swap, you had that on board --

3 BM3 [REDACTED] Yes.

4 BM1 [REDACTED] -- when you pulled into Santa Barbara and I had
5 MSD Santa Barbara actually dispose of it for us, because we took
6 it off the boat --

7 MR. MUISE: Okay.

8 BM1 [REDACTED] -- with the four people you recovered.

9 MR. MUISE: Okay. All right. Okay, any other debris?
10 That's significant -- that would be significant for a fire?

11 BM3 [REDACTED] That was it at that point. Later on in the
12 day we also picked up a piece of a door or a hold from the
13 *Conception* that the vessel assist had found in the debris field
14 after the *Conception* sank.

15 MR. MUISE: Okay. How about the -- any lifesaving equipment?
16 Life jackets, life floats, life rings? No?

17 BM3 [REDACTED] Negative.

18 MR. MUISE: Okay. And then human remains were transferred to
19 you guys or --

20 BM3 [REDACTED] Yeah. So after the -- this is BM3 -- after
21 the *Conception* sank, when we were searching debris, most of it was
22 clustered real close to the Island where the 45 couldn't really
23 tuck in. The vessel assist *Retriever* was in there and hailed out
24 to us on the radio, asked us to get closer to his boat, so that he
25 could call out to us verbally so he wasn't putting it over 22,

1 that he found a body. It was also tucked close to the island, so
2 we embarked MK2 [REDACTED] (ph.) and Seaman [REDACTED] onto the vessel
3 assist boat, and they also took one of the members from Santa
4 Barbara Harbor Patrol, their mesh body bag and our body bags.
5 They went, recovered the body, brought it back to us, where we
6 transferred it to another body bag, put in on our deck. We have a
7 mesh one. Because they were using the mesh bag to collect the
8 body out of the water without collecting any water that would make
9 it a lot heavier to pull up.

10 So it was the vessel assist *Retriever* with two of our members
11 and one of the Santa Barbara Harbor Patrol that picked up the four
12 bodies and then transferred them one at a time to --

13 MR. MUISE: And this all happened after the boat sank?

14 BM3 [REDACTED] Yes.

15 MR. MUISE: Okay. All right. That's important. Thank you.

16 Training-wise, do you guys participate in any kind of mass
17 casualty training with the locals or with the sector or MSD,
18 anybody else?

19 BM1 [REDACTED] We actually just went to a tabletop exercise.
20 My training petty officer, BM1 [REDACTED] (ph.) and you went --

21 BM2 [REDACTED] went, too, in regards to a mass casualty on an oil
22 platform. Right?

23 BM2 [REDACTED] Yes. BM2. We covered both a fire on a
24 roll-on/roll-off container ship, as well as a fire of one of the
25 oil platforms. So it was a tabletop discussion between all of the

1 four partners about either of those two scenarios.

2 MR. MUISE: Have you ever -- do you guys participate in any
3 inspections that the MSC does on the local dive boats?

4 BM1 [REDACTED] Negative.

5 MR. MUISE: Or are any of you guys divers?

6 BM1 [REDACTED] No.

7 MR. MUISE: Official divers or --

8 BM2 [REDACTED] Very long ago I was a recreational scuba
9 diver.

10 MR. MUISE: Are you familiar with these tour boats, these
11 dive boats, though?

12 BM2 [REDACTED] I am not.

13 MR. MUISE: No. Okay. So that first call that came about
14 the heart attack, did that come from the fire department or from
15 the sector?

16 BM2 [REDACTED] It was a phone call to me from the Sector
17 LA/LB Command Center.

18 MR. MUISE: Okay. All right.

19 BMC [REDACTED] So at night we don't have anyone in our
20 communications center --

21 MR. MUISE: Sure.

22 BMC [REDACTED] -- at the station so the radio guard is kept by
23 Sector Los Angeles/Long Beach. So anytime there is search and
24 rescue or anytime they need us to launch or task us with
25 something, it comes in via phone call, and that's the phone call

1 BM2 got.

2 MR. MUISE: Do you take calls directly from the fire
3 departments, you guys?

4 BM2 [REDACTED] Yes, we do through -- we are linked into
5 their dispatch system through an application called VCAD. It
6 doesn't stand for anything. We -- anytime we are dispatched by
7 them we get a text message on our OOD cell phone --

8 MR. MUISE: Uh-huh.

9 BM2 [REDACTED] -- that says you've been dispatched to a
10 call, and then we can go into the application and look up the
11 exact call to -- and it shows all of the call notes.

12 MR. MUISE: So via computer you're dispatching out from cell
13 phone.

14 BM2 [REDACTED] Yes. Exactly.

15 MR. MUISE: Okay. So major shipping lanes are going through
16 here. Did you notice any traffic that night?

17 BM2 [REDACTED] I did not in my -- I maybe saw one vessel
18 way off in the distance.

19 MR. MUISE: Way off but nothing close?

20 BM2 [REDACTED] No.

21 MR. MUISE: Okay.

22 BM2 [REDACTED] And no large container ships.

23 MR. MUISE: Anything else you guys have to add to the story
24 at all?

25 BM3 [REDACTED] No. I was here. So myself and BM1 [REDACTED]

1 we were here so after the two boats had left, we got the
2 notifications. We both came in directly from home to help manage
3 the situation. So we were here for everything that kind of
4 happened after the fact, including the *Grape Escape* coming in with
5 the four crew members. We were also here when the 45 came back
6 with the captain. I was here helping to coordinate medical
7 services with the four, you know, any kind of medical needs that
8 the four had when they came back on the *Grape Escape*, along with
9 what kind of our tasking was with those crew members after they
10 got back to land here at station --

11 MR. MUISE: Okay. Was there any --

12 BM3 [REDACTED] -- with incident command.

13 MR. MUISE: Any injuries to the first responders?

14 BM3 [REDACTED] No injuries to the first responders at all.

15 MR. MUISE: Or your crew?

16 BM3 [REDACTED] No injuries to our crew or the first
17 responders.

18 MR. MUISE: How about damage to your boats?

19 BM3 [REDACTED] None. As far as I know, no damage to -- no
20 damage or injuries to any Coast Guard assets. I can't speak for
21 the other agencies, though.

22 MR. MUISE: Okay. And then just back up --

23 BM3 [REDACTED] Sure.

24 MR. MUISE: -- we'll talk about radios. Is there any radio
25 dead spots around here? I heard you say you heard -- you could

1 hear them calling from the scene all the way to the station, and
2 that's, what, about 20 miles? Is that right?

3 BM2 [REDACTED] I would estimate 25 to 30 miles.

4 MR. MUISE: Okay. And that's typical? Pretty good
5 reception?

6 BM1 [REDACTED] We heard them over Rescue 21. So we have the
7 eyesights that that system gives --

8 BMC [REDACTED] We have eyesight capability that we can hear
9 everything in this area of responsibility.

10 MR. MUISE: Okay. Eyesights on the Santa Cruz?

11 BM2 [REDACTED] There are not.

12 MR. MUISE: Okay. Not to make light of the situation, but
13 I'm curious what -- from your position what went well? You know,
14 was there a procedure or piece of equipment or some training that
15 you -- each of you were glad you had that night that we can share
16 with other people?

17 BMC [REDACTED] Well, I'd just like to start, and then I'll let
18 these guys kind of go into it since they were on scene. This is
19 exactly what we train these crews for, is these calls in the
20 middle of the night. And the thing that we focus on is,
21 obviously, our operational risk management, getting our crews out
22 there safely, because if we're not safe we can't effectively help
23 the people that are in need.

24 So the thing that I would say went very well from Coast Guard
25 Station Channel Islands' perspective was these crews getting up in

1 the middle of the night and getting their vessel underway safely
2 and out to the scene as quick as possible to do everything they
3 could. Even though it may have been, you know, a situation that
4 couldn't be contained by anybody no matter how fast we got out
5 there, I would say that the thing that went well was
6 communications, all the way from the ODs, the coxswains, to the
7 command duty officer, to myself, of what the situation was, and
8 having that rapid, rapid response time was ideal.

9 BM3 [REDACTED] To piggyback on that, Chief, I was going to
10 hit on that, as well. No one talked over each other. Everyone
11 was step-by-step talking back and forth and the communication went
12 really smooth.

13 BM2 [REDACTED] I'll echo that, also. I also think that
14 our relationship and our Ventura County Fire Radio, the ability to
15 get medics or firefighters or what we need from the fire
16 department directly to our location is also a great key. And then
17 our management, our crew of getting out the door so incredibly
18 fast, waking people up, getting dressed. As Chief said, 3:30 in
19 the morning, this is what we train for.

20 It was about the worst -- it's the worst possible set of
21 circumstances. You have boat crews sleeping. You have a vessel
22 on fire 30 miles away. Even running, basically, as fast as my
23 boat can run, it took me 43 minutes to arrive on scene. You have
24 everybody sleeping, middle of the night, and yet we were still
25 able to respond in a very fast fashion, get on scene as fast as

1 possible.

2 BM1 [REDACTED] Our Station, so by policy we have a 30-minute
3 response time. From the initial call, we shall be underway within
4 30 minutes. Looking at the logs from the initial call to on scene
5 was 55 minutes. So from the call, we got on scene at a vessel on
6 fire 25-plus nautical miles away in 55 minutes, and I think that's
7 really extraordinary.

8 MR. MUISE: Okay. Anything else? No. I have nothing
9 further for you guys unless you have anything else?

10 Okay. With that I'm going to secure this. It's 9:05.

11 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: FIRE AND SINKING OF THE *CONCEPTION*
WITH LOSS OF LIFE NEAR
SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, CALIFORNIA
SEPTEMBER 2, 2019
Interview of USCG Station Channel Islands
Harbor Personnel

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA19MM047

PLACE: Oxnard, California

DATE: September 6, 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.


Beverly A. Lano
Transcriber