



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Office of Marine Safety

Date: January 5, 2003

Place: via telephone

Person Interviewed: Jenifer Adams, Passenger

Interview Conducted By: Jim Walsh
Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

INTRODUCTION

Jennifer Adams was interviewed in conjunction with the investigation into the sinking of the Small Passenger Vessel *Panther*. The text that follows is not a verbatim record of the conversation. It has been developed from my handwritten notes of the conversation and is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

INTERVIEW

Jennifer was traveling with another boat passenger, Peter Kazinoff. 12/30/02 was the last day in Florida. The couple had wanted to go on a boat tour and had tried unsuccessfully at several locations before settling on the National Park concession as it must be safe – it's in the National Park.

Jennifer and Peter arrived at the *Panther* five minutes before its scheduled departure. Captain told them that if they stayed in front they could expect to get wet. They left the dock and approximately one hour into the tour were watching birds and dolphins - the captain stopped the boat saying, "We have a little water to get rid of so we'll turn on the bilge pumps".

The boat stayed still for some time, five to seven minutes, she thought the captain prolonged the stop to see the wildlife. She then observed the captain of the *Panther* waving to another boat. She then heard the *Panther's* captain say this boat is sinking you're going to have to get on the fishing boat. As she stood up in response to the captain's words the *Panther* sank.

She felt that once the captain was aware that the boat was sinking he had a responsibility

to

organize and get the passengers ready.

Jennifer was one of the last to leave the boat, jumping into the water with her companion Peter. The strong current coupled with her wool sweater and clothes challenged her swimming abilities. She felt she could barely keep afloat.

A ring life buoy floated to the surface and she and Peter clung to the ring. Due to the ebbing tide Peter and Jennifer started to drift seaward with the current. They watched as the fishing boat crew and other passengers from the *Panther* lifted those passengers still in the water onto the fishing boat's deck.

Jennifer was beginning to get concerned, as they had spent what seemed like a long time in the water. They had drifted about two hundred to three hundred feet from the boat. Around this time an older lady passenger came drifting towards them commenting this is a bit much for an 85-year-old woman don't you think. The older woman's name was Helen, that's Jennifer's middle name, the fact that an 85-year-old woman wasn't panicking helped keep Jennifer composed.

Jennifer and Peter heard a man screaming for his son, and they started to call to the fishing boat that they had an 85-year-old woman that needed to be helped. Together with Helen, Peter and Jennifer kicked towards the boat. They were the last two passengers pulled from the water.

Once aboard the Crab boat they were again transferred to the Skimmer and brought back to the Park Service docks.

END OF INTERVIEW

Jim Walsh