

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGES

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Investigation of: \*  
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MV ETHAN ALLEN, \*  
LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK, \*  
OCTOBER 2, 2005 \* Docket No.: DCA 06 MM 001  
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Interview of: TOM VROOMAN

National Transportation Safety Board  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20594

Wednesday,  
October 12, 2005

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to  
notice at 2:10 p.m.

BEFORE: BRIAN CURTIS

## APPEARANCES:

BRIAN CURTIS  
National Transportation Safety Board

ROBERT FORD  
Investigator in Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

PETER GIONET  
New York State Parks

MAURICE ALDRICH  
Warren County Sheriff's Office

HUGH QUIRK  
Shoreline Cruises

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(2:10 p.m.)

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3 MR. CURTIS: Good afternoon. It's October 12th, 2005  
4 at 2:10 in the afternoon. I'm Brian Curtis of the NTSB, and  
5 we're re-interviewing Mr. Tom Vrooman, V-r-o-o-m-a-n, in  
6 regards to the Ethan Allen accident on October 2nd. Tom, we  
7 thought you may have some more information that may be helpful  
8 in our investigation. So before we get started, we'll go  
9 around the room and identify who's in the room and then we'll  
10 go with the questions. Brian Curtis, NTSB.

11 MR. ALDRICH: Investigator Moe Aldrich, Warren County  
12 Sheriff's.

13 MR. VROOMAN: Tom Vrooman, Shoreline Cruise mechanic.

14 MR. QUIRK: Hugh Quirk, Shoreline Cruises.

15 MR. GIONET: Pete Gionet, New York State Parks.

16 MR. FORD: Bob Ford, Investigator in Charge, NTSB.

17 MR. CURTIS: Tom, a little more specific questions  
18 today.

19 MR. VROOMAN: Okay.

20 INTERVIEW OF TOM VROOMAN

21 BY MR. CURTIS:

22 Q. The first time you went on the vessel, do you recall  
23 when that was?

24 A. That was the day it was moved from the airport to the  
25 location where we washed it, which is right down the road from

1 the airport. I don't know the name of the place.

2 Q. Okay. And once again, your responsibilities with the  
3 company?

4 A. Upkeep for the boats, the Ski Nautiques. If there's  
5 many major issues, they usually call me over to look at  
6 something, diagnosis and fix it if need be.

7 Q. Okay. We've heard comments and maybe you can  
8 enlighten us on it, that you may have seen someone taking tools  
9 down into the engine spaces of the vessel, is that true?

10 A. I was asked the scenario on the date that the water  
11 pump issue came up, and I explained to Matt, I believed I  
12 talked, that everybody left except me, you, and Pete. And we  
13 mainly went down in the front bilge to take pictures, and then  
14 we came back up and that's when Pete mentioned the water pump.  
15 Then they asked me if I'd seen any tools in anyone's hand, and  
16 I said no. I do remember a tool bag being picked up, either on  
17 the way down into the bilge or on the way out of the bilge.  
18 That's all I seen. And they asked me if I'd seen Pete down in  
19 the bilge. I didn't see him down in the bilge and I didn't see  
20 him take tools down there. I remember him picking up a bag of  
21 tools. I don't know if was before or after me and you went  
22 down in the bilge. That's what I was asked and that's what I  
23 said.

24 Q. Okay. And you conveyed this to --

25 A. To Matt, Matt Quirk.

1 Q. Any other questions he asked you?

2 A. Not really. Mainly just if I'd seen Pete go down  
3 with tools, and if he went down there with tools, if they were  
4 in his pocket. I said no, I didn't see him go in with any  
5 tools. I remember him picking up a bag on the front, or the  
6 starboard side on the front seat, and I don't remember if was  
7 before we went down or after.

8 MR. CURTIS: Okay. I'll pass it along. Moe? If you  
9 could identify yourselves as we go around, as well?

10 MR. ALDRICH: Moe Aldrich, Warren County Sheriff's.  
11 Can I wait until everybody else is done, if that's fine?

12 MR. CURTIS: Sure.

13 MR. ALDRICH: Okay.

14 MR. QUIRK: No questions.

15 MR. CURTIS: Hugh?

16 MR. QUIRK: No questions.

17 BY MR. FORD:

18 Q. This is Bob Ford, NTSB. Could you describe the tool  
19 bag?

20 A. I believe it was a light-colored canvas bag. It had  
21 two handles. And the only reason I knew it was tools, because  
22 I heard them rattle when they were picked up.

23 Q. Approximate dimensions. So you're describing  
24 about --

25 A. Half by this.

1 Q. About 12 inches wide by or bigger?

2 A. I can't really say because I didn't really look at  
3 the tool bag.

4 Q. Um-hum.

5 A. I just remember him picking up a bag and I heard  
6 tools.

7 Q. Was it a deep bag? Were the tools where it could not  
8 be seen in it?

9 A. Yes, I did not see any tools.

10 Q. You did not see any type of tools, then.

11 A. I just heard clinking, like tools.

12 Q. And you saw somebody carrying them?

13 A. I seen Pete grab it from the front seat of the boat,  
14 on the starboard side. And like I said, I don't remember if it  
15 was when we were all leaving or before me and Brian went down  
16 in the bilge.

17 Q. Okay. It was sitting on a bench, it was on the deck,  
18 or where was it?

19 A. It was the bench, I believe.

20 Q. It was on a bench and he left the boat with it, with  
21 the bag tools?

22 A. I don't know. I don't know where he went with it.

23 Q. Um-hum.

24 A. If he put it in a vehicle, I didn't see him go  
25 anywhere with it.

1 Q. Did you ever see him in the bilges with the tools?

2 A. No, I did not.

3 MR. FORD: Okay.

4 BY MR. CURTIS:

5 Q. Brian Curtis again. Just a couple -- you said that  
6 you were aware before that they changed the raw pump out  
7 sometime ago?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Do you recall when that was?

10 A. Not specifically. Maybe a couple of months ago they  
11 came to me with the original water pump and they showed it to  
12 me, and I advised them to get a new water pump, and that was  
13 the last time I heard of it.

14 Q. They being?

15 A. Jim Quirk and I don't know the guy who had the water  
16 pump. He's not working. I haven't seen him in a while.

17 Q. Was there any mention that the -- whether it was --  
18 we've heard comments that it may have been an impeller failure  
19 first.

20 A. On the new water pump?

21 Q. Yeah.

22 A. I haven't heard anything about that.

23 MR. CURTIS: Okay. That's all I have.

24 BY MR. ALDRICH:

25 Q. Okay. Do you work at Shoreline Cruises or Shoreline

1 Sales?

2 A. I work for Shoreline Cruises, but mainly I'm over at  
3 the sales building. That's where they bring their boats to  
4 fix, over there. So I'm not around the public fixing them.

5 Q. How long have you been there?

6 A. I think I've worked for them for five months, right  
7 around there.

8 Q. You're a licensed mechanic?

9 A. Yes, I'm certified through Cummins Diesel.

10 Q. Okay. And it's five months, you said, right?

11 A. Give or take. I'm not specific on the dates. I  
12 could find out for you.

13 Q. When did you get licensed by Cummins?

14 A. It was in 2004. I have all my paperwork and my card,  
15 but it's in my wallet and that's in my car.

16 MR. ALDRICH: Okay. On the record, I'm all set.

17 BY MR. FORD:

18 Q. Okay, I have some questions. This is Bob Ford again.  
19 You said Peter. Which Peter are you referring to?

20 A. Pete, this gentleman sitting right over here.

21 Q. The man sitting in the interview.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. When was the first time you met -- have you ever had  
24 any dealings with Peter before?

25 A. I think we met one time on the boat when it was

1 initially brought over to the water treatment plant. Nothing  
2 formal.

3 Q. Okay. So only during this accident investigation.  
4 You've never had any dealings with him before that?

5 A. Oh, no, sir.

6 MR. FORD: Okay, that's all I have.

7 BY MR. CURTIS:

8 Q. Just one last question myself. Brian Curtis. If the  
9 water pump fails on the Cummins diesel, and you're a  
10 licensed --

11 A. Um-hum.

12 Q. -- Cummins mechanic, why do you suppose you weren't  
13 involved in the repair?

14 A. I don't know.

15 Q. You weren't contacted previously to the --

16 A. I was contacted to take a look at it, at the water  
17 pump, and they had already removed it from the vessel and it  
18 was in the autumn (ph.) office, where a little shop is at the  
19 waterfront, above the waterfront. And they showed it to me and  
20 I advised them to get a new one, and that was the last time I  
21 heard about it. I don't know why (indiscernible).

22 MR. CURTIS: Okay, thanks, Tom. Well --

23 BY MR. FORD:

24 Q. This is Bob Ford. I have one more. Does Shoreline  
25 Cruises own a tool bag similar to this? Have you seen another

1 tool bag similar to this?

2 A. The only tool bag I have ever seen was Hugh's.

3 Q. Is that light-colored, too?

4 A. No, it's green.

5 Q. Okay. So the entire time you saw this bag was either  
6 on the -- I'm not trying to put words in your mouth.

7 A. No, that's fine.

8 Q. It was either on the bench or you saw Peter pick it  
9 up --

10 A. Right.

11 Q. -- or move it?

12 A. Right.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. I don't know where it went.

15 MR. FORD: And where it went, that's fine. Thank you  
16 very much.

17 MR. CURTIS: Moe?

18 MR. ALDRICH: On the record, I'm done.

19 MR. CURTIS: Hugh? Peter? I guess that's it, Tom.  
20 Thanks a lot. It's 2:20. I appreciate your coming in.

21 MR. VROOMAN: No problem.

22 (Whereupon, at 2:20 p.m., the interview in the above-  
23 entitled matter was concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

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

IN THE MATTER OF:            Investigation of MV Ethan Allen  
                                 Lake George, New York  
                                 October 2, 2005  
                                 Interview of Tom Vrooman

DOCKET NUMBER:            DCA 06 MM 001

PLACE:                        Washington, D.C.

DATE:                         October 12, 2005

was held according to the record, and that this is the  
original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been  
compared to the recording accomplished at the hearing.

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David Martini  
Transcriber