

[Snap Judgment intro]

Glynn: Hey, Snappers. We know you enjoy your storytelling in the bright light of day, but if you also like your storytelling crafted in the dark of night, this is for you. Because right now, we're hiring two freelance story scouts for our incredible sister show, Spooked. In our efforts to bring you more supernatural stories from around the globe, Spooked is searching for someone who has lived in or has deep cultural knowledge of the Caribbean or the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the American South, Southeast Asia, or West Africa. This amazing story scout will find and pitch original first-person stories, and work closely with the Spooked team and work closely with me. Is this person you? Do you know someone who might be interested? For more information, go to snapjudgment.org/careers.

[upbeat music]

Glynn: Today on Snap Judgment, proudly present, Double Trouble. My name is Glynn Washington. Buckle up because you're listening to Snap Judgment.

[upbeat music]

Glynn: We're kicking off today's Double Trouble episode back, way back in the Berkeley in the 1970s. It was the late days of America's cultural revolution. Young people everywhere, experimenting with alternative ways to live fuller and more peaceful lives. And because of that, this story does mention substances that may or may not have been legalized depending on where you live. But Dale, Dale just wanted to climb rocks, and he wanted to do it in Yosemite Valley.

Dale: When I used to climb there and do hard routes, I used to walk up to the rock and smell it. The wind and the smell of the pine needles, I can't even describe it.

Anna: Dale Bard, first and foremost, was a rock climber. It was the 1970s and the sport was still very young. Historically, mountaineers rock climb as a way to practice for larger peaks they wanted to get up. So, if you think climbing up rocks for the sake of climbing up rock seem silly, back then, people thought it was totally absurd.

Dale: At the time, probably, there was 50 rock climbers in the United States. People recognized my talents, told me I should go to Yosemite Valley. I quit college, to my parents' disbelief, left with no money and hitchhike up to Yosemite Valley with a tent and my climbing equipment, and almost no food, an Ensolite pad and a sleeping bag. Oh, I did have a pillow. I forgot. Yes.

Anna: The valley is defined by smooth granite cliffs that reached thousands of feet up from the valley floor. At the base of these cliffs, tucked back in the forest at a place called Camp 4. Dale found his people.

Dale: And that's when I got involved in the scene.

[rock music]

Anna: A handful of climbers had set up a permanent camp. These climbers were some of the first climbers in the country, and they will later become legendary for their climbing achievements. But at the time, they were just some dudes in the woods that loved climbing rocks.

Dale: A day in Camp 4 was not really a day in Camp 4 because we really didn't spend much time in camp. We would go climbing all day. So, train, climb, train, relax, go to sleep. My annual budget one year was -\$15.

Anna: How did you have no money?

Dale: We had connections in things. We had friends in places, and sometimes I'd be given food. We did pilfer from the local grocery store every once in a while, but it wasn't a lot, but it was enough to get by.

Anna: Living like this, seeking out the free food, sometimes stealing a little on the side when necessary, these guys got this life down to a science. For a little while, the Rangers look the other way. That is until the riot.

[rock music]

Dale: In the 70s, there was a riot in Stoneman Meadow, and it's a very famous one.

Anna: Some hippie kids were camped illegally in a place called Stoneman Meadow. When the Rangers came out on horseback to break up the crowd, the kids pulled the Rangers off their horses and chaos ensued.

Dale: When that happened, and it happened with hippies and people that smoke dope, with that, the Rangers had to change their whole style because it's the US government and they had to be able to control a situation like that. So, they created a department called LEO, which stands for Law Enforcement Officers. In other words, they created a police force.

The camaraderie between the climbers and the Rangers diminished pretty rapidly. We called them Pine Pigs. How we felt at the time, this isn't your park, it's our park. All they wanted to do is drive around in cars with 45-caliber guns on their hips. We actually appreciated the park and used it the way it was supposed to be used.

Anna: After Stoneman Meadow, the climbers kept doing exactly what they'd always done. Until one morning when Dale went to the lodge for his morning cup of free coffee and the Rangers decided it was time to teach the climbers a lesson.

Dale: We had learned some tricks. We get free cups of coffee and possibly eat off of people's plates that left their plates to be bused into garbage. I just came in one morning and kind of groggy. As I'm

walking over, I look over at a table and I see this coffee cup, put my finger through the handle and walked over the table. I never even made it that far and a security guard came up to me, and just said, "That wasn't your coffee cup," and I'm looking at him going, "Okay, come on. You're kidding."

[dramatic music]

Anna: The officer was not getting kidding. They cuffed Dale on the spot and threw him in county jail for a week. He was stripped and put in a delousing tank. The bigger guys in his cell stole his sleeping pad and his pillow, and Dale slept on the concrete floor.

Dale: I had a very sobering experience. I will say that. Finally, I get shackled and put in back in the van again and driven back up to Yosemite for the trial.

Anna: The judge looks incredulous.

Dale: And he goes, "You spent a week in jail for a cup of coffee?" So, he dismissed the charges.

Anna: But even though Dale was free from prison, the Park Service still wanted to make an example of him. So, they handed down maybe the worst punishment they could think of.

Dale: They suspended me from the park for 90 days.

Anna: Why not just leave for 90 days? Three months isn't that long a time for the risk, given the risk.

Dale: You don't love rock climbing, obviously.

Anna: [laughs]

Dale: That is a long time, and it's too long of a time. If you're used to climbing every day, that's not an option. So, what I did is I packed up my tent, and there's a giant boulder field behind Camp 4. I went up into the boulder field and I lived up in the boulder field where I was out of sight, out of mind. I still climbed every day. I just had to be very careful to not be seen. Also, a lot of times, I was up on a big wall. So, that's a place where Rangers can't find you.

Anna: Dale came out of hiding to climb and to hang out with friends at camp at night. It was on one of these nights when Dale and some buddies were sitting around at the picnic table, that their friends, Frank and Arnold, rolled back into camp, visibly excited about something.

Dale: Frank and Arnold, they came in and they said, "Oh, my God, you won't believe what we found."

Anna: By now, there are probably 20 or 30 climbers that lived in Camp 4. When they heard the commotion, a crowd gathered to see what was going on. Frank told the story.

Dale: He had just taken a short tour out to this lake with a friend of his. They were skiing back, and they looked out on the lake and this is like early spring, so the lake is basically what is termed as candling, meaning it's thawing out. And they saw this tail of an airplane sticking up out of the lake. The first impression is that, "God, we've got to let somebody know." They also started going, "Man, there's probably bodies." So, they started looking around. They didn't see any bodies, but in the waters, this big thing pops up, and it's a burlap bale. They shimmied out there and hooked the bale with a ski pole, dragged it over the ice, got it to a safe spot and realized what it was, opened it up and just went, "Oh, [bleep]." Marijuana, pot.

Anna: Inside that burlap sack, they saw the treasure they had never even known to dream of. They saw their ticket to many more years of elective unemployment.

Dale: Then, they looked out on the melting part of the lake and saw multiple bales. So, they came back to camp and they told everybody and they said, "Man, there's stuff out there." Everybody had dollar signs in their eyes at that point. Hank and Stefan said, "Let's go." They got up the next morning. When they came back, and there was visible proof that this was real, it was what do they call it? A run on the bank. Everybody and his mother were grabbing whatever pack they could have, and marching in to the lake. Bring packs out, bust up the bales, and take as much as they could as they could carry and bring it back in.

Anna: Over the course of the next few weeks, they got more and more efficient at extracting the weed, pulling it out assembly line style. They hiked out with chainsaws that they stole from the Park Service. One guy would cut a square of ice, the next guy would pull the ice out, the third would fish for the bales. This lake in the middle of the woods in the middle of nowhere was suddenly crowded with climbers and their friends stuffing their packs with as much pot as they could possibly carry. But Dale wasn't with them. Driving the main road out to the trailhead was too risky. He might be seen in one of the cars.

Dale: I opted to not go to the lake.

Anna: But this didn't stop Dale from getting in on the action.

Dale: My job was to dry the pot, because I could do that in the boulders.

Anna: He'd been hiding from the Rangers in that boulder field for weeks. So, he also knew exactly where to hide the weed.

Dale: The downside to the pot was that it had to be dried because the plane crashed and so there was jet fuel in the water. The first couple pounds that we dry it out, we didn't dry it out enough. When you rolled yourself a joint, it was some spontaneous combustion when you put a flame to the joint. It was just called "Airplane Weed." If you knew it was airplane weed, you knew it was tainted with jet fuel. My job was pretty simple although I will say that every once in a while, I got a little bit nauseous from the fumes because you had to rake it and stir it. And imagine, 900 square feet of marijuana that you're raking and the jet fuel fumes are coming off.

Anna: Once Dale was done drying it, the pot was then transported to LA and San Francisco to be sold. It took about a month to clear the lake of all the pot they could find.

Dale: Later, we figured that a bale was probably 50 pounds dry. After all was said and done, we retrieved over 200 bales of pot. 200 bales at 50 pounds a bale, and whip out your calculator.

Anna: By the end of the run, Dale estimates they moved 10,000 pounds or five tons of marijuana.

Dale: Climbers that truly needed some financial subsistence, so to speak, they got it. Some guys bought brand new cars. Some guys bought homes. I didn't make very much, but it was enough for me to live very comfortably for four or five years. By the time the Park Service found out about it, everything was gone.

Anna: When the Park Service recovered the plane once the ice melted, they didn't find much pot, but they did find two bodies. This story might sound kind of hard to believe, but there is actually photographic evidence. One photo is of a huge burlap sack with dark brown leaves in it. Another is of some guys chain sawing through the ice. Yet another is some climbers wearing full backpacks, grinning from ear to ear. They look young and fit, and happy.

Dale: I guess the biggest frosting on the cake because of the LEO section of the Park Service was, "Touché, we got the weed. You don't even know who got the weed. You can only guess who got the weed. And we got the money and you guys got sandbagged."

Anna: They were 50, maybe even over 100 people going up to the lake that spring. So, we figured it couldn't be that hard to find someone that had gone up to the lake. The people we did talk to, most of them now in their 50s and 60s, some of them with grandkids, they all finally remember those carefree days where all they had to do was climb and dumpster dive. And of course, they all remember the lake full of pot. When we asked them if they were there at the lake stuffing their packs full of it, a wry smile spreads across their face and a glimmer is in their eyes. "Nope," they say, "Definitely not me."

[rock music]

Glynn: Big thanks to Dale for that story, and for protection of the people involved in this piece, pseudonyms were used. I want to personally thank though, Cisco DeVries, who as we walked through Yosemite Valley a while back, he told me this story, a story that his father, Papa Tom DeVries had worked on as a reporter many years ago. Thanks also to all the climbers that helped us, and a big huge thanks to the filmmakers, Greg Laut and Nicholas Rosen, from Sender Films. Check out a link to their amazing documentary on this very story, *Valley Uprising*. We have a link on our website, snapjudgment.org. The original score and sound design for that piece was by Leon Morimoto. It was produced by Julia Dewitt and Anna Sussman.

[slow rock music]

Glynn: After the break, we're going out to sea, and this voyage might not be the most relaxing trip. Stay tuned.

[slow rock music]

Glynn: Welcome back to Snap Judgment, listening to our Double Trouble. For our next story, we're going on a vacation. So, kick your feet up, enjoy a nice piña colada and just relax, because it's all inclusive. Everything is taken care of, we promise. I'm going to let Joel Rosenberg take it from here.

Joe: Okay, so let's start out this story with a request. [chuckles]

Moss: I played it in so many--

Joe: This guy you're hearing is Moss Hills.

Moss: [singing] "This [unintelligible 00:17:49] on the roof." Give me a second.

Joe: He'll be our entertainment for the evening, a musician of many years.

Moss: [singing] "And are the [unintelligible [00:19:01]]."

Joe: But we're looking for a different song.

Moss: First line start. [guitaring] Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right. [singing *Sea Cruise*] "Old man rhythm, he got nothing to lose."

Joe: Because you see, Moss isn't just any musician. No. He is a cruise ship entertainer.

Moss: [singing] "And won't ya let me take you on a sea cruise a single week." We just get the party going, and everyone throws streamers and I do singalong songs and conga lines and it's a fantastic vibe. I love doing it.

Joe: For Moss, working as a musician on a cruise ship, it never felt like settling.

Moss: When you're working to an audience on a cruise ship, every single person in the audience is on holiday. No one's driving to work the next day. All your tired old jokes work every time. It's just a perfect venue. [singing] "Oo-ee baby. Won't ya let me take you on a sea cruise?"

Joe: Moss was actually in a duo with his wife Tracy. He played guitar, she played bass. It was like they were on vacation, forever. Even when things went wrong, they can be fun, memorable. Take this time they were on this ship called the Oceanos. And they were expected to host this wedding off the coast of South Africa. Only they were in a really bad storm.

Moss: And they do the ceremony, people are walking in and supposed to be this quite moving thing as the bride's walking up the aisles and a father's giving her away, and the guests are all standing. But they're all rocking to the left and then rocking to the right. It looks like some macabre weird dancers, whole rooms doing it. I hid behind the flowers with a sick bag so that every now and again, the organist could lean over, look at me, and I'd quickly rush the bag out, shove it up his face, he'd fumble into the bag, and then go back to [humming *Here Comes the Bride*] da da da da da da da. And it was ridiculous.

Joe: The only problem is that the next day, the wedding was over, but the storm wasn't. In fact, it was only getting worse.

Moss: And it was so rough that we could see the waiters trying to serve food to the guests. And in fact, food and trays were falling over. That has never happened with me on a ship before. And eventually, nobody was laughing. People were just starting to get tense. And then, all the lights went out.

[eerie sea sounds]

Moss: And the ship was just plunged into darkness. Standing there, in the lounge, in the dark, that little emergency lights came on, but they're very dim. The ship feels suddenly so eerie, and some of the people who were already in the lounge were shouting out, "What's happening?" I went over to some of them are saying, "Look, just sit tight, everything's going to be right." I was making a joke and saying, "We forgot to pay the electricity bill. We're going to pay it. It'll come back on." Whilst I was saying all that, we heard the engine stop.

[silence]

Moss: I thought this is now starting to become something dangerous. I was worried what was happening.

Joe: The passengers were worried too. Without being told, people were emerging from their cabins and dining areas, and congregating at the natural meeting point of the ship, the Four Seasons Lounge, which is where Moss was.

Moss: They were just milling around. And then, I thought, "Well, I better try and be on stage and try and focus people's attention." I had an acoustic guitar. So, I just started saying, "Don't worry, it'll all get sorted out soon. Let's just stay in here. We'll have a bit of fun." And I just started singing a few songs. [singing *American Pie* song]. I remember doing a little bit of Don McLean's *American Pie*. And we got to that part of the chorus which goes, [singing] "Good old boys were drinkin' whiskey and rye and singin' this'll be the day that I die." Tracy and I are looking each other and thought, "Hmm, let's not do that one." I just went straight into The Beatles. [singing *Eight Days A Week*] "Oh, I need your love, babe."

It's amazing actually to think that, I can't find the right song for this audience. Just play The Beatles, and it's incredible. They just sing along wherever you are. That band is just phenomenal. Anyway, people

were singing along, and I kept expecting an officer in white to come striding in and tell us what was going on or to hear “Dingdong,” and over the PA system, “This is the captain from the bridge with some announcement.” But absolutely nothing was happening. I could perceive now the ship was lurching and leaning more to the starboard side. It wasn’t recovering, coming back level again. And I tell you, it doesn’t matter how good an entertainer you are, or you think you are, people just want to know what’s going on.

I went to Tracy and quietly without passengers hearing us. I said to her, “Look, I need to go and try and find somebody in authority.” She said to me, “Well, Moss, please don’t do anything stupid.” I said, “No, no, I won’t. I need to find out what’s happening.”

Joe: Moss wasn’t necessarily looking for the captain at this point. He’s mainly looking for his boss, cruise director. But when he found her, she was speaking to the captain.

Moss: The captain was telling her that the storm was really bad, and that he wanted to start to abandon the ship. And that’s when I interjected and said, “Well, why are we going to abandon the ship?”

Joe: Which, of course, Moss wasn’t supposed to do. He was the guitarist. The captain was the captain.

Moss: I could see the cruise director to look at me a little bit in amazement, and the captain just looks right through me. I’m of no consequence to him at all.

Joe: The captain briefly explained to Moss that they were abandoning the ship as a precaution.

Moss: I said, “Are we sinking?” he said, “No.” I said, “Is there a fire?” He said, “No.” You can’t argue with the captain, but I just did not believe that. You would not make people abandon the ship and go into a black dark night and a terrible storm in rickety little lifeboats, if you didn’t absolutely have to. I left and I thought, “I need to see what is the danger that we are supposedly abandoning the ship for.” I went to find a friend of mine, Julian.

Joe: And Julian, just in case you’re wondering, was one of the onboard magicians.

Moss: Julian was always very good at closeup magic and he had some great outfits because when he’s on stage, you can’t take your eyes off him. And he’s just constantly changing capes and all sorts of stuff. Anyway, I said to Julian, “Let’s just go right down to the lowest area of the ship that we can.” We’re going down the staircase, just hanging onto the railings being thrown from side to side, and going deeper and deeper into the ship until we got to an area called the shaft tunnel.

Joe: The shaft tunnel is basically the rock bottom of the ship, and it’s where the propeller shafts run through the vessel, kind of this long hallway where normally you would hear the shafts spinning. But now it was just dark and silent.

Moss: As the ship rides up over a wave and in crashes down into the trough, and that next wave hits it and the whole ship shutters, and that's somewhat disconcerting. We started walking forward until we came across one of the watertight doors and it was closed. Now, the watertight door wouldn't be closed unless there was good reason to do that. I remember putting my ears up against the door, and they're very, very thick metal, but I could hear water pounding the other side of that door. And now suddenly you do feel fear. Fear can be a physical kind of feeling, you feel it deep in your stomach. Us both are thinking, "Oh, my word, we're sinking."

Joe: When he and Julian emerged from the shaft tunnel, it was pandemonium.

Moss: We could hear crew shouting in six different languages and utter disarray. Julian and I were trying to ask questions, we're just being ignored. Lots of the crew were grabbing small bags and getting themselves packed up.

Joe: At this point, there still hadn't been any announcement from the captain. The passengers were all still in the lounge or in their cabins, just waiting. So, Moss and Julian went right back to the lounge and got all the entertainers together.

Moss: And then, I said, "Look, I know for sure the captain is not telling us the truth. I can't wait for announcements any longer. We need to try and start getting people into lifeboats."

Joe: This is the part where I imagine Moss turning stoically to all the passengers assembled in the lounge, and saying, "Come with me if you want to live." But Moss says it didn't really work like that.

Moss: I think they were somewhat taken aback that this sort of instruction was coming from a guitar player and a magician and various other of the entertainers, but there was nobody else.

Joe: And if you're wondering how to stage a mass evacuation of 600 people from a sinking ocean liner, you're not alone. Moss and the other entertainers, they didn't know either.

Moss: There are master keys, but I had no idea where the master keys are. We also considered trying to make an announcement ourselves, but I didn't know where to do it. I didn't know what buttons to push or even where those buttons were. So, we started banging on doors, just waking people up.

Joe: Then, there was the matter of how to work the actual lifeboats.

Moss: Because we're supposed to attach the lifeboats to the side of the ship and we did not know how to do that. But now the ship was tipping over so much on the starboard side, as you lower that lifeboat, it swings away from the ship, and then it comes rushing back towards it and smacks into the steel hull. And the people inside the lifeboat [unintelligible [00:28:50] squeal and shout in fear and shock as it hit the side of the ship, and then it would swing out again and hit again.

Joe: And you have to keep in mind that during all this, officers and crew were mixed up with the passengers, trying to get into the lifeboats themselves.

Moss: But once they were in the lifeboat, they were shouting, "Launch, launch, launch." Julian was asking, "Well, we need to put more people. How many are supposed to go?" "No, it's full, it's full. Lower the lifeboat." These guys are not even trying to get as many people in as possible. As soon as they're in it, they just want to go.

Joe: Still, they hadn't seen the captain leave the ship. When the last of these lifeboats left, Moss and the other entertainers went up to the bridge.

Moss: And, of course, the bridge is also in darkness like the rest of the ship with is. All of the controls and instruments and radar panels are all on and the lights are all blowing and flickering, but we couldn't see anybody. And suddenly, we're turning to each other and realizing, there's nobody on the bridge. They must have abandoned us. And we still had a little over 200 people left on board.

[intriguing music]

Glynn: Oh, it ain't over. Will Moss reach the South African Navy to rescue the sinking Oceanos cruise liner or go down with ship? The water is rising. Stay tuned.

[intriguing music]

Glynn: Welcome back to Snap Judgment. You're listening to our Double Trouble episode. My name is Glynn Washington. Last we left, the water is rising and the sinking Oceanos cruise liner, the captain is nowhere to be found. And guitar player, Moss Hills, is trying to reach the South African Navy over the radio to get help, and get help fast. Snap Judgment.

[electronic music]

Joe: At this point, the ship itself was in a bad way. It sunk all the way down to its upper decks and was getting hit broadside by the waves.

Moss: We thought, "Well, if we just start calling Mayday on one of the radios, we're hopefully going to get hold of someone.

Joe: Do you even know what frequency like your--?

Moss: No, but we decided let's not change any controls or any dials because whatever it is that these guys do on the bridge or they must have been doing it, I'm assuming that one of those channels must still be set. I was calling on the radio, "Mayday, mayday, mayday, please help us," and then letting go, listening for reply. "Mayday, mayday, mayday." And that's when we heard a voice saying, "Okay, okay." We thought, "Oh, thank goodness, somebody replied. And now someone's going to come and rescue

us." But he just kept saying, "Okay, okay. What's your position?" So, I said, "We're about halfway between the Port of East London and Durban. And it's off the sort of northern part of the Southeast Coast of South Africa." And he said, "No, no, no, no, what-what-what's your position? What are your coordinates?" I said, "I don't know what the coordinates are." And him snapping back and saying, "What rank are you?" Me saying, "I'm not a rank. I'm a guitar player."

Joe: After taking a moment to process, the officer on the other ship helped Moss contact the South African Navy so that they could locate the Oceanos and send out some choppers. But to help with that, they really wanted Moss to find the captain, the one who was still on board somewhere.

Moss: Underneath one of the staircases that leads down to the swimming pool area, I saw the captain and the radio officer, both hiding in the shadows there and just smoking. I remember thinking, "Wow." I said, "Captain, can you come to the bridge? We've managed to make contact with a ship. If you can come there and just help us and give instructions." And he was just smoking and saying, "No, it's not necessary." And I was like, "Yes, we need you to come to the bridge. We can't answer the questions." And he just kept saying, "No, it's not necessary." He just seemed to have completely given up. He didn't look panicked. He didn't look anything. He looked vacant, and I just left him there.

Joe: A short while later, a chopper appeared on the horizon. Moss didn't need the captain anymore. He had the Navy. The Oceanos had been found.

Moss: When those Navy divers came on deck, it did feel like now finally, somebody is on board who is going to be in charge, and they're going to take over here. But they said, "Look, we don't think we can get everybody off. Simple as that."

Joe: For the divers, it was just pure math. There was too many people and not enough time. They said that if they brought in a second chopper, they just might be able to get everyone hoist off the ship before it sank. But they told Moss that because they didn't have enough manpower, he would have to work one of the two rescue lines, putting passengers into a harness.

Moss: I was really very, very concerned. I didn't really want to do this because suddenly, it just felt very different to everything else that we've been doing so far, because they said, "If you get it wrong, they'll drop from that harness and hit the deck and be probably killed, or they might just be dropped into the water and just swept away. So, you've got to get this right each time and you've got to do it fast."

Joe: And don't forget, this is all on a windy, pitching, tilted, sinking ship.

Moss: I knew that if we split the people in half, that I was going to have to rescue 114 people through this method.

Joe: Moss was stuck between a rock and a hard place. Once they started hoisting people up, Tracy did a great job keeping people in line, but when Moss tried to clip them into the harness too quickly, they

would slide down the deck and he would have to go rescue them. That ended up costing him a lot of time. But when he tried to go slowly, carefully, that cost him time too. He felt like he was failing.

Moss: As we've hoisted two elderly ladies, I misjudged the waves. And a big wave hit the ship, and the whole ship lurched. And as they swung out, these ladies just hit the side of the ship with a smack. And then, they just hung in those harnesses like ragdolls.

Joe: The chopper continued to hoist the two women up, but Moss had no way of knowing whether they were okay. It was the first time someone got hurt who he felt responsible for.

Moss: I lost my nerve for a while. I just couldn't put anybody else in the harness. So, I signaled Tracy just to hang on. I remember turning my back to the railing and sitting there and just looking down the steep deck, going away from my feet as I sat there, and the water below me, and just thinking that this is just too much, there's still so many people left to rescue. I know we're going to lose people who's going to go? Who's going to be lost and who are we going to save? But there was no choice, you've got to do it. You can't let the enormity of it encroach on the basic driver, we're getting off here. So, I got back up off the deck, and then told Tracy to send more people out to me, and I was just focused on making it happen.

In that time of real crisis, so many of those passengers thanked me, which I just found remarkable. I remember them saying to me, "Careful of your fingers, you need to play guitar." Two became four became six, and then suddenly, we realized there was no one else left except for the Navy diver, and just Tracy and I, it was finally our chance to get rescued. We looked at each other, and then we didn't say a word. That cable came taut, pulled us off the deck. And as the helicopter was pulling away, I remember just looking down my ship, drowning in front of me. It's hard to explain. I really don't know why, but I felt a very strong attachment to the ship that I've not felt to other ships. I've been on so many ships before and after. But that Oceanos, when I saw her as we flew away, I felt like I was abandoning her. As we came to land, I remember one of the military people saying to me, "Is everybody off?" And me saying, "Yes, everybody's off. It's all over." I said that, and I just couldn't stand, and I remember I started to sob. I just couldn't control it. And I just collapsed.

Joe: Moss and the other entertainers had saved every single passenger, over 400 people, including the people on the lifeboats and the two elderly ladies. They were pretty bruised up, but they were okay. Just about the only thing Moss couldn't save was the Oceanos herself. He didn't get to see her sink but the news chopper managed to capture her final moments. This is the actual audio from that tape.

Moss: I've seen that footage many, many times and I can see exactly where I was running my rescue station from. I can just see that just go underwater. I can then see the section where Tracy was keeping all the passengers organized. I can see that go underwater. Then, the whole stern of the ship just lifts right out of the water until it's vertically in the air, and it just slowly just nosedives completely down. Finally, can just see debris and orange lifejackets and bits of deck chair, and so just literally being blown into the air by this enormous roar of air. It's like a great beast just giving its last gasp of breath. And

suddenly, the Oceanos is gone and there's not even a ripple. It just disappears and the waves carry on, and the ocean just shrugs.

Joe: Moss never lost his love of the sea. After the sinking of the Oceanos, he and Tracy continued to work the cruise lines. Today, Moss is a cruise director. He says that most captains take him pretty seriously. But he still insists on playing guitar at least one night every voyage. If you ask, he might even sing you that *Sea Cruise* song, only with a twist.

Moss: I took that tune and I wrote a song to tell the story of what happened with the Oceanos sinking. This is my Oceanos song. [singing] “And here's my story of the Oceanos and how that ship became world famous. I'll tell you it straight, I won't tell a lie and it's a sad sorry story. So, try not to cry. And we sang, ‘Mayday. Mayday. Get me to the shore, because the ship's going to sink.’ Well, in the age-old tradition, it was women and children first.”

Glynn: Thank you so much to Moss Hill for sharing his story to Snap. There are so many details about that night, but we weren't able to include. So, we want to be sure to thank the members of the Oceanos entertainment team who helped during the rescue including, but not limited to, Moss's wife and bandmate, Tracy, the cruise director, Lorraine, both of the onboard magicians, Robin and Julian, the members of the Green Dolphin Show band, and, of course, the brave men and women of the South African Navy. If you want to learn more about the Oceanos, we'll have links to the website Moss put together about this sinking, as well as to that video that he mentioned of the ship's final moments. All that at snapjudgment.org. The original sound design was by Renzo Gorrio. And that story was produced by Joe Rosenberg.

Moss: “We sang, ‘Mayday. Mayday. Get me to the shore because the ship's going to sink.’”

[music]

Glynn: Lord, Snappers, musician who saves the day in the middle of the ocean. Mary Jane tainted with the fuel that makes you fly. That was but one episode. And more, many more episodes await your listening pleasure. Subscribe to Snap Judgment podcast, instantly become the most interesting person you know. And even better, you can rock a Snap t-shirt to let these clowns know you're nobody to fool with, available right now snapjudgment.org.

Snap is brought to you by the team that [unintelligible 00:40:26] to go down with the ship and of course, the uber producer, Mark Restich, he always brings his own life raft. Anna Sussman, Nancy López, Pat Mesiti-Miller, Renzo Gorrio, Shaina Shealy, Teo Ducot, Flo Wiley, John Fecile, Marisa Dodge, Regina Bediako, David Exumé, Bo Walsh, and Annie Nguyen.

This is not the news. No way is this the news. In fact, you can find your own secret stash, the good stuff, only to discover that every person you vow to absolute secrecy also binds 10 other people to absolute secrecy, and you would still, still not be as far away from news as this is. But this is PRX.

[music]