

ST LUCIE COUNTY

U.S. Coast Guard investigating death of fisherman whose body was found in Fort Pierce Inlet

**Ananya Tiwari**

Treasure Coast Newspapers

Published 12:36 p.m. ET Jan. 17, 2024

ST. LUCIE COUNTY – The U.S. Coast Guard’s investigation into the death of the commercial fisherman whose body was found in the Fort Pierce Inlet Jan. 12, is on-going, and the exact cause of death is being determined by the Treasure Coast’s Medical Examiner’s office.

Brian Ronshausen, 50, went missing on the night of Jan. 8, and was last seen launching a small boat from Stan Blum Boat Ramp on North Causeway in Fort Pierce. His Carolina Skiff was found floating unoccupied by other fishermen early Jan. 9 in the channel near Riverside Marina, in the 2300 block of Old Dixie Highway north of downtown Fort Pierce, according to the St. Lucie County Sheriff’s Office on social media.

Trulee Snell, 68, who is Ronshausen’s mother, said bystanders found his body floating in the Fort Pierce Inlet Jan. 12, days after the U.S. Coast Guard suspended its search-and-rescue mission almost 24 hours after Ronshausen went missing.

“I’m glad they found his body and we got closure. It’s been very horrendous just because of not knowing,” Snell said.

The U.S. Coast Guard’s investigation into the incident is still ongoing at this point, said Petty Officer 3rd Class Nicholas Strasburg.

Ronshausen’s autopsy is complete, but the final report will take six to eight weeks, according to the Treasure Coast Medical Examiner’s office.

As a commercial fisherman, it was Ronshausen's routine to cast nets at night, Snell said.

“That spot where his boots and fishing nets were found were what he called his honey hole, or where conditions are ideal for catching fish, and where he caught a lot of his bait fish and things like that,” Snell said.

She said the St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office has videos from the dock of Ronshausen jumping into the water. The agency's public information officer did not respond to TCPalm's questions regarding the video.

Snell said she can only guess as to what happened.

"Knowing him, he probably did jump in to try to get into his boat. And he didn't even have any kind of a ladder where he could have climbed up on it," she said.

Ronshausen's sister Danielle Myrter of Palm City has started a GoFundMe campaign to raise money for Ronshausen's funeral. The campaign has raised \$7,725 of a \$10,000 goal as of Jan. 17.

"It is with a humble and grateful heart that we call on our community once more to help us give Brian a proper send off so that we may have a place to remember him as the years pass," it says.

Ananya Tiwari is TCPalm's business reporter. You can contact her at ananya.tiwari@tcpalm.com or follow her on Twitter.com at @Ananyati.