

On Monday, September 6, 2004, David VanZandt and Kevin Magee took advantage of the Labor Day holiday and went diving. They took Dave's boat "Sea Dragon" out of Whiskey Island Marina in Cleveland, OH. The day was bright and sunny with pleasant 70-75 deg F temperatures, but a very stiff south wind was blowing, creating 3'-4' swells and whitecaps only a mile or so from shore. Thus, the dive plan was modified to only dive the close wrecks in the sheltering lee of the shore.

The first dive was on the "117th Street Wreck," an unknown wooden wreck in 45' of water off Lakewood's 117th Street. The water's surface temperature was 70 deg F, and surface visibility was acceptable at about 5'-8'. Viz deteriorated slightly upon reaching about 40' depth, and bottom viz was about 3'-5'. While not really dark, a light definitely helped cut through the gloom and illuminate things to make them more visible. The anchor snagged some wreckage about 20' off the wreck, and reels were run out to find the wreck. It consists of only one side with ribs visible. Bottom temperature was just slightly lower than the surface at 68 deg F. Because the visibility was acceptable, a lot of time was spent off the wreck searching the surrounding area for other parts. Total time was 40 minutes, and max. depth was 46'.

With airplanes in the distance from Cleveland's Air Show, the second wreck visited was the "John B. Griffin," a 60' wooden tug that caught fire and sank in 1892 in 48' of water near the Rocky River. There were lots of green algae blobs and organic particulates in the water at this site, reducing surface viz to 5' and making the water look like a soup. The anchor was discovered to be in the mud, and the bottom viz was also poorer at about 2'-3'. Reels were once again used to find the wreck. The wreck faces with the bow roughly SE. The bow is somewhat intact with both sides coming together to form a "V" shape and some silt-filled interior space. The bow leans heavily to the port side at an angle greater than 45 degrees. The wreck is highly broken with mostly the port side exposed and only some of the starboard side. The port side stands about 3'-5' off the bottom and has no decking attached. A boiler rests in the middle of the wreck, and a small auxiliary water tank hangs from the top of the boiler off the starboard side. Visibility and lighting improved slightly on top of the boiler to about 3'-5'. Behind the boiler is a small hole and some additional structure for the exhaust and/or engine. The stern is noticeably wider and slopes downwards to the mud bottom where it disappears into the mud. Some wooden cross pieces allow navigating over to the starboard side with pretty much the same result. Total time was 26 minutes, and max. depth was 49'.