

The OEANGATE - TITAN DISASTER

A Psychological Perspective

Dr. Joe MacInnis June 30, 2023



**"At some point safety just is pure waste . . .
at some point, you're going to take some risk . . .
I think I can do this just as safely by breaking the rules" . .**

Stockton Rush

Personal statements and interviews suggest that **Stockton Rush** was a 61-year-old wealthy, white male searching for celebrity. Rush had charm, charisma, conviction and confidence.

Rush ignored the basic rules of physics. His magical thinking included carbon fibre is fail-safe, certification agencies don't make your sub safer, previous dives to *Titanic* confirm your sub is indestructible and self-rescue is unnecessary.

Rush's psychological weaknesses included lack of empathy, humility, honesty and integrity.

Rush's saturation burnout—generated by years of stress—enhanced his psychological weaknesses.

Rush suffered from mission fever—the need to make a dive because of financial and marketing pressures. Unsuccessful missions in the previous weeks accelerated this fever.

Evidence suggests that Rush was a high-functioning sociopath, a mental condition in which the person shows no regard for right or wrong and ignores the feelings of others. This condition affects some 3.5 % of the population. Rush had solid social skills and an ability to fit in with people. He was calculating and patient in manipulating situations for his benefit. A terminal liar, he had little respect for authority and rules.

**"I am tired of industry players who try to use a safety argument to stop innovation . . .
safety is about culture, not paperwork . . .
a piece of paper does not guarantee the safety of a sub " . . .**

"The carbon fibre and titanium? There's a rule you don't do that. Well, I did."

Stockton Rush

Dr. Joe MacInnis studies the psychology of leadership in high-risk environments. He has collaborated with the US Navy and Canada's Special Forces. His last book, *Deep Leadership*, was published by Random House.