

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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*SEASTREAK WALL STREET* ALLISION  
WITH PIER 11 IN NEW YORK, NY  
ON JANUARY 9, 2013

Docket No.: DCA-13-MM-005

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Telephonic Interview of: YVETTE CAFARO

Saturday,  
January 12, 2013

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL KARR  
Accident Investigator

## APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL KARR, Accident Investigator  
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I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Telephonic Interview of Yvette Cafaro:

By Mr. Karr

4

I N T E R V I E W

1  
2 MR. KARR: This is Michael Karr of the National  
3 Transportation Safety Board. It's approximately 4:50 on Saturday,  
4 January 12th. On the phone, I have Yvette Cafaro, who was a  
5 passenger on board the *Seastreak Wall Street* at the time of the  
6 accident.

INTERVIEW OF YVETTE CAFARO

7  
8 BY MR. KARR:

9 Q. And first thing I'd like to ask you, Ms. Cafaro, is what  
10 is your occupation?

11 A. I'm a [REDACTED].

12 Q. And what I'd like you to do is tell me what -- describe  
13 the accident and anything else you'd like to tell me and then when  
14 you're -- when you've completed doing that, I'll ask some follow-  
15 up questions. So please go ahead.

16 A. Okay. So, you know, Wednesday was a, you know, it was a  
17 beautiful morning. It was a very pleasant trip in. I do take the  
18 boat very often. I don't normally work all the time, but in  
19 the -- you know, ever since Hurricane Sandy, I have been working 5  
20 days a week in the City, so I have been taking the boat. I either  
21 take the 8:00 or the 8:55, and that morning I did take the 8:00.

22 As we approached Pier 11, like we always do, the boat  
23 slowed down, and you know, I started to gather my things and get  
24 ready to, you know, move to the front entrance. I was headed up  
25 to the front right-hand side, which is where I usually depart

1 from.

2 But it felt to me like the boat had already stopped  
3 before the crash happened. I guess, obviously, you know, now I've  
4 been reading to find out what, you know, what exactly did happen  
5 and now I don't think that was the case, but it felt like we had  
6 already stopped. And, you know, I think there was only one other  
7 person or two other people in front of me to the door. And then  
8 the next thing I knew, I was kind of flying through the air.

9 There was really nothing in front of me, other than the  
10 passengers who faced in. I remember going kind of -- I definitely  
11 remember being airborne and going toward them. And then the next  
12 thing I remember, I was on the floor, but much farther back. So I  
13 don't know exactly what happened, but I know I was thrown forward  
14 and then somehow, I think I was also then thrown backwards.

15 When I went forward, I remember another person like on  
16 my left-hand side. I remember colliding with someone, that we hit  
17 heads; his head hit my head. And then, you know, the next thing I  
18 knew really was being on the floor and they were, you know, kind  
19 of -- we were all kind of on top of each other. There were a few  
20 people on top of me. I was, you know, on top of the gentleman,  
21 who I think is the same person that I collided heads with. And I  
22 was -- my leg was underneath a woman who had a bad head wound. So  
23 my leg was supporting her.

24 So you know, when we realized, oh, my goodness, you  
25 know, there was a crash, something bad happened, you know,

1 everyone was very concerned about each other. You know, we  
2 checked to see, you know, who's okay, who's okay. I realized her  
3 head was bleeding very badly. So I asked for a blanket or a towel  
4 and someone gave me a scarf and I wedged that between her head and  
5 my leg. So I never -- you know, I didn't try to really get up or  
6 to move much. I was really just kind of concerned with her.

7           And then, obviously, some time went by. I remember  
8 asking her, you know -- she asked me to get her cell phone for her  
9 and I got her phone for her out of her bag. And then when the  
10 firemen started to come in, you know, they were assessing, you  
11 know, who was really hurt and I let them know that her head was  
12 bleeding really badly. And they asked me to move. And when I  
13 went to get up I realized that my left foot was completely numb.  
14 I couldn't feel it.

15           And when I put like -- you know, used my hands to try to  
16 get up, I also realized that I was like a little woozy. So they  
17 told me to stay where I was and then, you know, a few minutes  
18 later, two firemen lifted me up and put me into a seat. So then I  
19 was in a chair and I, you know, I waited until they came to me.  
20 And then, you know, at that point, I realized that, you know, I  
21 had throbbing on the side of my head, which must have been when,  
22 you know, me and that other gentleman collided and then, you know,  
23 my neck also hurt a lot.

24           So they, you know, told me to just, you know, remain  
25 where I was and then, they put a neck brace and they put me onto

1 one of those orange structures, and then took me outside and I  
2 waited outside until there was an ambulance ready for me.

3 Q. How many people were in the ambulance with you, you  
4 know, how many injured people were in the ambulance with you?

5 A. There was just one other injured passenger in the  
6 ambulance.

7 Q. All right. And during the trip, are you normally seated  
8 until it's time for you to get up?

9 A. No, I mean -- well, I always think of that's time to get  
10 up when the boat slows down. I mean, it's kind of -- of course,  
11 I've read now that there are supposedly are signs that say that  
12 you shouldn't get up until the boat is completely stopped. You  
13 know, I know, you know, my morning routine is as soon as the boat  
14 slows down, you know, everyone starts to assemble towards the  
15 exits, only because, you know, there's only two exits and there's  
16 about probably 250 people who get off at that stop. So you know,  
17 everyone does start to make their way, even if it's just, you  
18 know, standing up and getting their coat and whatever on, and just  
19 you know, head toward one of the exits.

20 I mean, there's certainly been times where I rode the  
21 boat where I didn't have a seat and, you know, I stood the whole  
22 trip as well. Which I think is, you know, is normal. You know,  
23 many passengers would say that they've, you know, ridden either to  
24 or certainly home from the City, standing. So, you know, it was  
25 -- I didn't feel that I was doing anything unusual or certainly

1   unseen especially on a day like that.  You know, there are days  
2   where, you know, it's really -- it's a rough ride and that was,  
3   you know, one of the, you know, one of the -- certainly the more  
4   pleasant mornings, especially this time of year.  So, you know, I  
5   certainly wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary.

6           Q.   Did you notice anything or hear anything unusual?  
7   Particularly, if you could, tell me more about how it -- how the  
8   boat -- how you thought the boat had actually stopped before the  
9   crash happened?

10          A.   It -- I mean, so what happens is as we approach the  
11   dock, before we even really make like -- we kind of almost make  
12   like a little bit -- like a slight left turn when we pull into  
13   Pier 11.  You know, we had already made that turn and it -- I  
14   certainly felt that we were no longer moving, it just felt that  
15   way to me.  I mean, there are times -- I'm trying to think and  
16   really like visualize again what happened.  The door wasn't open,  
17   and usually what happens, especially in the winter, is they put  
18   the bridge, kind of the walkway or the ramp, I don't even know  
19   what that's called, they put that out before they open that side  
20   door.  So that certainly wasn't open yet.

21                But to me it felt like we had already stopped, because I  
22   remember, you know -- I don't know if you've been on the boat or  
23   if you have a diagram of the boat, but there's a row that's in  
24   between there, there are tables to one side and then there are a  
25   row of chairs.  And I walked up the aisle in-between the tables

1 and the chairs and then, to me, I felt like we had stopped and  
2 then I came around the aisle and now I was more in that open area  
3 right by the door, which I felt very lucky to be there, only  
4 because only a few seconds before I was in-between a chair and a  
5 table and I know the woman who was in that position, you know, she  
6 hit the wall. The wall broke her fall as opposed to me kind of  
7 being a little airborne and falling on people, which was  
8 definitely a better place to be, because I saw, you know, how  
9 severely hurt she was. To me it just seemed that we had already  
10 slowed down.

11 Now, you know, one other thing that I did notice that  
12 day is I thought we arrived early. And the only reason why I  
13 thought that is because, you know, I had been reading my book and  
14 when we started to slow down, I was like, why are we slowing down?  
15 And then I looked out the window and I saw, oh, my goodness, we're  
16 here already, and then I looked at my watch and my watch said  
17 8:38. And I don't know if it's because lately we had been late.  
18 I mean, that boat is supposed to get in at 8:40. It just seemed a  
19 lot -- you know, it seemed like we had been getting every day at  
20 8:45 and not by 8:40.

21 Now with that being said, I'm certainly not being  
22 accusatory that I think that they did, you know, anything wrong in  
23 any way, only because the people at *Seastreak*, the -- all of the  
24 employees there are, I mean, just always extremely courteous and  
25 extremely professional. They usually always explain whatever

1 situation is going on, like, you know, if they are a few minutes  
2 delayed or if it is going to be a bumpy ride, they usually tell  
3 us.

4           You know, and there certainly weren't any announcements  
5 that morning, but I don't know if they didn't know what was going  
6 to happen until it actually happened. Of course, that's what I  
7 assumed was the case, because I was pretty sure that I had seen  
8 one of the deckhands outside already, which is normal. You know,  
9 obviously, we pull up and they, you know, get the rope to tie us  
10 in. So, you know, I certainly didn't sense or feel in any way  
11 that anything was abnormal.

12           Q.    So tell me about that deckhand, where was he?

13           A.    I thought I -- you know, when I saw him, I didn't see  
14 him like when the impact or anything like that happened, but I  
15 know I had seen him outside the door prior to, you know, the  
16 collision.

17           Q.    And outside which door, the starboard or port?

18           A.    And starboard is up front, right? I'm sorry.

19           Q.    Right or left?

20           A.    Right.

21           Q.    Okay.

22           A.    So and that's where I was. I was at that right-hand  
23 door.

24           Q.    All right. I don't have any more questions. Well, let  
25 me -- you know, tell me about your injuries.

1           A.    Okay.  So at the time, you know, I knew that I had a  
2 head injury and I knew that I had a lot of pain in my neck.  And  
3 then as the day, you know, went on and like by the time I was in  
4 the hospital for a little while, my lower back really started to  
5 bother me and my right-hand upper arm.  The hospital discharged me  
6 as having a minor head injury, but I certainly felt that I had a  
7 slight concussion.  And the doctor told me that I probably did,  
8 because I was, you know, very nauseous and I almost vomited a few  
9 times and I was very dizzy.

10                I also had no feeling in my left foot.  By the time, you  
11 know, my -- toward the end of my hospital stay, I did get all  
12 feeling back in my foot, but, you know, I knew that it wasn't just  
13 a regular bang to the head.

14                And since I left the hospital, the pain in my right arm  
15 traveled more into more shoulder, so I had made an appointment to  
16 see an orthopedist this week, only because each day, you know, and  
17 especially today, the pain has gotten worse and worse.  And I know  
18 that I landed on this arm when I got thrown back to the floor, so  
19 I'm not really sure what's going on there, what's going on with  
20 the arm.

21                As far as you know, my head, that feels a lot better.  
22 You know, there's certainly still some aches in, you know, my back  
23 and my neck but, you know, I think it's still early to know, you  
24 know, whether or not, you know, whether that's just from soreness  
25 or if it's anything else.

1 Q. Correct. Yeah, most of the people I've talked to said  
2 they're still -- they still feel sore and sore muscles and, you  
3 know. I mean, it -- like one lady said, it felt like she was in a  
4 prizefight, so --

5 A. Yeah, that's what I said to my husband, and he said, oh,  
6 my goodness. I said, I can't -- because I felt, other than, you  
7 know, my head really hurting so much on Wednesday night when I  
8 went to bed, I said, okay, you know, I don't feel so bad. And  
9 then when I woke up Thursday, I was, you know, moaning. And then  
10 yesterday was worse. And he said, you know, that's normal. Like  
11 it's normal for like, you know, you play a football game and you  
12 don't feel it for a couple days. But, you know, you were really  
13 banged up. So I'm anxious to start feeling the opposite way as  
14 opposed to each day feeling a little bit worse.

15 So that's why -- and, you know, it's hard to say, like  
16 is there something that's prolonged or if it's still just the  
17 soreness. Because in my memory, I -- you know, I definitely know  
18 I was airborne and was thrown forward pretty far and then I think  
19 I was thrown back again. So, you know, that would explain why  
20 everything hurt so much.

21 MR. KARR: Correct, correct. Do you have anything for  
22 me? If not, I'll give you my name and phone number, and if you  
23 want to contact me with any other additional information, that'd  
24 be great.

25 MS. CAFARO: No, I think that's it. And I did, you

1 know, take down your number and your name. And certainly if  
2 there's, you know, anything additional that I can help with, you  
3 know, I'd be happy to help, because, you know, I'm anxious to find  
4 out what happened. You know, I am going to attempt going to work  
5 on Monday morning. And I'm going to take the boat, so you know,  
6 but like I said, I -- you know, I've always felt safe on the boat  
7 and I've always felt that the, you know, the crew and the staff  
8 have been very professional and very forthcoming with, you know,  
9 communicating to us whatever they can. So, you know, I'm  
10 certainly interested, as everyone else is, to find out, you know,  
11 what in the world happened and, you know, how we know that it's  
12 not going to happen again.

13 MR. KARR: Exactly, exactly. All right. Well, I thank  
14 you very much for your time. Thanks for calling me back.

15 MS. CAFARO: Thank you. And good luck.

16 MR. KARR: All right. Thank you very much. All right,  
17 have a good weekend.

18 MS. CAFARO: Thank you, you too.

19 MR. KARR: Bye.

20 MS. CAFARO: Bye.

21 MR. KARR: That ends the interview with Yvette Cafaro at  
22 5:06 p.m.

23 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

24

25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:            *SEASTREAK WALL STREET* ALLISION  
WITH PIER 11 IN NEW YORK, NY  
ON JANUARY 9, 2013  
Telephonic Interview of Yvette Cafaro

DOCKET NUMBER:            DCA-13-MM-005

PLACE:                      New York, New York

DATE:                        January 12, 2013

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.

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Katie Leach  
Transcriber