

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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SEASTREAK WALL STREET ALLISION

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WITH PIER 11 IN NEW YORK, NY

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Docket No.: DCA-13-MM-005

ON JANUARY 9, 2013

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Telephonic Interview of: ROSEMARY COURTNEY

Friday,
January 11, 2013

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: MICHAEL KARR
Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL KARR, Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board
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I N D E X

ITEM

PAGE

Telephonic Interview of Rosemary Courtney:

By Mr. Karr

4

I N T E R V I E W

(9:45 a.m.)

1

2

3

MR. KARR: All right, it's about 0945 on --

4

MS. COURTNEY: 8:45.

5

MR. KARR: Pardon me?

6

MS. COURTNEY: 8:45, right?

7

MR. KARR: It's 8:45? All right.

8

MS. COURTNEY: Oh, no, I thought you meant the time of
9 the accident.

10

MR. KARR: Oh, no. Right. It's -- today's date is
11 about -- 9:45 on January 11th and I'm speaking with Rosemary
12 Courtney.

13

INTERVIEW OF ROSEMARY COURTNEY

14

BY MR. KARR:

15

Q. And if you could just -- what's your profession?

16

A. I'm an [REDACTED].

17

Q. And if you could, tell me what -- tell me about what
18 happened on the morning of the accident.

19

A. We were pulling towards Manhattan and we were -- I think
20 we were about 100 yards offshore and I felt a little bit of the
21 engine change somewhat. I thought we had hit some debris offshore
22 because I noticed there was a change in the pattern of the engine
23 sounds that we're used to. And I believe we were to the right of
24 the pier more than usual, so more into the river, the river
25 current. So then, I guess, we tried to dock.

1 We, you know, we were -- we accelerated. We were in an
2 acceleration that was faster than normal into the farthest side of
3 the pier and that was the first jolt. And people were standing
4 and those who were standing fell on top of each other and some of
5 those -- I was on the upper deck and upper seating area on the
6 right side, you know, looking out the window. I was in the window
7 seat. And some of the larger men in the aisle fell onto some of
8 the people in the seats and one of the seats popped out and hit a
9 fellow on the face, and then another fellow hit his head on the
10 window upstairs.

11 So, and then the boat drifted out again, back out about
12 maybe 100 yards and I remember, you know, trying to understand how
13 they would evacuate us because we were offshore. And, you know, I
14 was looking for the Coast Guard because I knew people were
15 injured. But then the captain was able to maneuver us into a
16 docking position, which was our normal docking position. And
17 then, the -- on the right side of it, the boat, where people
18 disembarked upon on the outside stairs, the deckhands and
19 passengers started to scream for help to the police. There were
20 two female police officers on the dock approaching the boat and
21 the deckhands started screaming, you know, "Call 911, we need
22 help. Someone go to the fire department, get the fire
23 department."

24 So, then a few minutes -- we all sat for a while
25 upstairs, and then we were asked to disembark, I believe, to the

1 bow. And the -- as I was -- I checked on the fellow -- a fellow
2 bleeding upstairs and he was, you know, walking and coherent. He
3 was going to go down the stairs. And then I flagged the Coast
4 Guard guys and told them we needed help upstairs. And then I went
5 downstairs and walked past a friend of mine who was on the ground
6 and I stayed with her and helped. She had had brain surgery in
7 the summer, so I got her surgeon's name and the guy at the bar
8 helped me write it down.

9 And I was with another fellow, Andy Hall, and he was
10 helping our friend as well. So, we stayed with her until she --
11 we helped her all the way to the ambulance, and then followed up,
12 got her eventually to her -- the hospital, and she was discharged
13 that night. She had a concussion and needed staples. So, I, you
14 know, I was there for another probably 45 minutes after the
15 accident just with her and with -- when they were triaging.

16 So, that's what I remember. And it was very low tide.
17 I remember writing that down.

18 Q. Well, that was a good recollection. Did you say -- did
19 I hear you say the vessel seemed to be accelerating?

20 A. No, it was the acceleration rate was faster than normal.

21 Q. The acceleration rate? Now, what do you mean by that?

22 A. It wasn't like a thrust. It was that we were
23 approaching the dock faster than normal.

24 Q. Oh, okay. All right.

25 A. So, I mean, normally, there's a subtle -- you know,

1 normally, you can feel it go in reverse to do -- he does like a
2 turn somewhat when he's approaching, you know, because he has to
3 put it in reverse to slow it down and --

4 Q. And you never felt that reverse?

5 A. Oh, I always feel it in reverse. That didn't happen.
6 It -- to me, it felt like when things get stuck in the jets. When
7 things get stuck in the jets, when debris gets stuck in the jets,
8 we glide a bit. So, to me, it felt like that, that we were
9 gliding. But because we were at, you know, the normal rate of
10 speed, we were going faster, we didn't get to the reverse step.
11 And the current is strong there to the right of the dock, you
12 know. It's the New York Harbor, so it's the fast current, so we
13 were -- I believe we were in that current more than normal.

14 Q. Are you a boater?

15 A. My husband's a ship's captain -- used to be. He's in
16 shipping, so we talk about the process. That's why I was sitting.
17 He tells me to sit upstairs.

18 Q. Bear with me a second. What was your first indication
19 that something was wrong?

20 A. The -- I just didn't feel like we were positioned the
21 way we normally are. So, I don't usually stand up until I can
22 hear the quiet positioning of the boat. It was a split second
23 though. It wasn't enough time, you know, to --

24 Q. So it just came out of nowhere? You were not expecting
25 this at all?

1 A. Right. Well --

2 Q. The sudden stop?

3 A. No. Yeah. No, it was like a car accident.

4 Q. Okay. That's a good way to describe it.

5 A. Everyone looked around at each other and just -- I
6 shouted to my friend across the way, sit back down in the seat.

7 Q. And how soon before the collision was that?

8 A. No, that was after the collision. Because sometimes if
9 you bump the dock, there's usually a secondary bump, so I warned
10 her to sit back down because you don't know what you've hit, you
11 know, if you're gliding, so --

12 Q. Did you hear any -- after the accident, was -- did you
13 hear any announcements over the PA system?

14 A. I -- no. I heard live voices screaming for help.

15 Q. And the two police officers that were on the dock, did
16 they look like they were aware of what happened?

17 A. No. They seemed to not to be responding as fast as I
18 would have like them to respond. I wanted to scream out the
19 window at them, but I restrained myself because enough people were
20 yelling at them.

21 Q. Is there any specific example of passenger behavior
22 you'd like to comment on?

23 A. Could you repeat that?

24 Q. Any particular passenger behavior that you'd like to
25 comment on?

1 A. I thought everyone was pretty, pretty calm and was very
2 cooperative, helping each other. It was just the fellow over on,
3 you know, on the right side that fell down the stairs and I
4 believe there was, you know, a deckhand who could be badly
5 injured. So --

6 Q. So --

7 A. -- I felt like it was amazing how people helped each
8 other and I felt the FDNY were unbelievably good, and some woman
9 triaging. I don't know where she came from, but she was great.

10 Q. Yeah, I was up here on the *Barberi* accident and I am
11 impressed with the response of the FDNY, the EMS folks, and the
12 police.

13 A. Yeah. I felt like we were in good hands and --

14 Q. The person that you said that fell down the stairs, so
15 you thought that person was badly injured?

16 A. Well, I just -- that was where the screams for help were
17 coming from mostly and I know that's where people -- it's middle,
18 so it's -- that's a bad side to be falling down.

19 Q. All right. So this is -- you're on the second deck and
20 how many stair levels? You said it was a forward stairway. Is
21 there only one or are there two stairs?

22 A. Going down to the second deck, there is one, two, three,
23 four stairs.

24 Q. Were you -- there's four -- but which one --

25 A. There's one in the center --

1 Q. And is that the one where the -- where you heard most of
2 the screams?

3 A. No, I heard them from the outside, like towards the
4 stern on the right side of the port. (Indiscernible) put it into
5 -- that's where I heard the screams, but I was sitting on that
6 side, so --

7 Q. Were you in --

8 A. And that's where you can see the -- that's where you can
9 see where people disembark. We've been disembarking on the stern
10 and that's where the cops were standing. So they were shouting to
11 the two women cops on the dock.

12 Q. All right. Were you seated outside or inside?

13 A. Inside.

14 Q. Okay. And how many -- I was briefly on the boat and I
15 only thought there were two decks. How many decks are there with
16 seats?

17 A. There's an inside deck upstairs, and then on the top,
18 there's an outside deck, but nobody sits there in the winter, you
19 know.

20 Q. All right.

21 A. But people do -- there is a -- outside the inside deck,
22 there's a platform where there's three sets of stairs that go down
23 and that's where people -- there were a bunch of people queuing
24 there, and then there were people queuing in the inside. There's
25 pictures of the broken window in the door upstairs. That's from

1 someone queuing on the inside, I believe, that's --

2 Q. Yes. I went on board and I saw all the broken or all
3 the -- not broken glass, but shattered glass.

4 A. Yeah.

5 Q. Tell me about your injury.

6 A. Well, I don't really have -- I just hit the seat in
7 front of me.

8 Q. With your head?

9 A. No, shoulder, my right shoulder.

10 Q. Right shoulder? Okay. How does it feel now?

11 A. It's a little stiff, not like -- late that day, I felt
12 strain, but then I -- it's fine. I didn't feel anything after.

13 Q. I mean, were you one of the folks that the police or
14 fire department spoke with?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay. So --

17 A. I mean, I spoke with them just helping my friend, but
18 not about me.

19 Q. Correct. Okay. So -- well, this is interesting because
20 I know I've got like about 80 injured folks and you probably
21 qualify as an injured folk, but we don't know that. Now, we do.

22 A. See -- well, there's a lot of people who -- I mean, one
23 woman is on the bottom of five men and she's -- you know, she
24 didn't go to -- the people who left right away didn't get tagged
25 as injured.

1 Q. Right.

2 A. Like, that was one announcement, if you can get off,
3 please get off the boat, because that was the triage. You know,
4 they were bringing them in, and then they said everybody injured
5 stay and -- yeah, that's how they had to manage it before. And
6 then they took the first -- I'm not sure how many, but mine -- my
7 person got on within 45 minutes, but she's, I guess, you know, one
8 of the higher priorities, I think. She was in with two other
9 people in the ambulance, so --

10 Q. Well, tell me -- so this woman that was on the bottom of
11 five men, she went right to work? She didn't --

12 A. Right. I saw her yesterday and I went to give her a hug
13 and her arms were a little bit tight.

14 Q. Were a little what?

15 A. Tight.

16 Q. Oh, my goodness.

17 A. She was bruised. So because she usually queues.
18 Because if you're a Midtown commuter, you either stay on the boat
19 or you are the first ones off to catch cabs to go to Midtown. So
20 those people are usually on the front of the line. So she
21 normally is outside, but she wasn't outside yet because she was
22 chatting, so -- but she ended up with five large people on top of
23 her, so she's a little bruised.

24 Q. Wow, that's interesting. And in casual conversation,
25 did she say why she didn't go to see a doctor?

1 A. Well, there's -- you know, and people with lacerations
2 -- one fellow said he had a 10:00 meeting. I think we were just
3 in mode to -- I think you just wanted to get off and you knew
4 other people were -- you know, there was blood, you know -- well,
5 you saw it probably.

6 Q. Yes.

7 A. But -- so, I think people with less -- you know, it was
8 sort of a self-triage, you knew to -- and most people have -- you
9 know, that's sort of a late-ish boat to get to a meeting. You're
10 pushing it if you're on that boat to get to your 9:00, so --

11 Q. Well, I thank you. I -- you've given me a lot of
12 information. You've given me some good insight. You're the first
13 person that I've spoken to.

14 A. Oh, that's good.

15 Q. So there's --

16 A. I can -- I mean, if -- when you -- they had us all sign
17 in this morning on the boat so you might get more -- I don't know
18 if that was you guys or their internal process.

19 Q. Well, they are -- it's probably both. We -- yes, they
20 are very anxious to reach out to anyone.

21 A. Yeah, he -- I did -- when I was helping my friend, a
22 fellow who sat next to me and was very nice and I kept trying to
23 push him out of the way to try to get the triage woman or someone
24 to come over, but he was the president of the company, so he
25 introduced himself. I didn't remember his name, but I looked it

1 up later. So he was there when it happened and he seemed very
2 angstful.

3 Q. Oh, the president of the company was there? Okay. I
4 was not aware of that.

5 A. Well, he said he was the president, so -- I was going to
6 say, well, there's -- probably half the people on the boat were
7 presidents of something, but he was like the *Seastreak* -- I looked
8 him up later.

9 Q. Oh, so you think he is the president of *Seastreak*?

10 A. Yeah. I looked him up on (indiscernible).

11 Q. Okay. All right. Well, let me give you my number.

12 A. All right.

13 Q. It's 202-302-3486, and it's -- my last name is spelled
14 Karr, K-a-r-r, and I am out of Washington, D.C. And if you have
15 any questions, feel free to call. I appreciate you --

16 A. Your first name is Mike, did you say?

17 Q. It is.

18 A. Okay, thank you. All right.

19 Q. All right. Thank you coming forward.

20 A. Have a good day.

21 Q. All right. Thank you very much.

22 A. Thanks. Bye-bye.

23 Q. Bye.

24 MR. KARR: This ends the interview at approximately
25 10:20.

1 (Off the record at 10:20 a.m.)

2 (On the record at 10:40 a.m.)

3 MR. KARR: All right, it's 10:40 on January 11th.
4 Follow-up phone call with Rosemary Courtney, who called me back
5 and wanted to talk about the accident again.

6 BY MR. KARR:

7 Q. So go ahead and tell me about --

8 A. I revisited my notes from the morning of and I had
9 written down that it felt like we hit Sandy, Hurricane Sandy
10 debris. And I remember thinking that day that, where we live,
11 there's still large debris in the water, like a dumpster from the
12 sailing club where we belong, and I did say out loud to some of my
13 neighbors on the boat that we hit debris, we hit Sandy debris. So
14 that was about 100 yards offshore. I just wanted to add that
15 comment.

16 Q. When did you tell your neighbors about this?

17 A. That morning. When I looked over at my neighbor, who
18 was still -- who was standing after an impact, and I said, you
19 should sit -- you know, I said, you should sit down; I think we
20 hit Sandy debris. So that was --

21 Q. All right. So did you feel, did you feel a jolt?

22 A. I felt a very large jolt, but with regard to the -- that
23 was hitting the pier. But before that, I felt like something had
24 been -- had hit engine, but wasn't stuck in it. You know,
25 usually, if we hit some -- if there's something stuck in the

1 engine, you can hear it and the captain usually puts it in reverse
2 to flush the engine. But it was just more subtle and some kind of
3 impact, and I remember thinking it was Sandy debris offshore.

4 Q. All right. Did you know that the water jet system was
5 changed to a propeller system? And I just give you that
6 information in case you want to think back to what you felt or
7 heard or -- and use that to help evaluate what you're talking
8 about.

9 A. That really wouldn't -- that's kind of lost on me. So I
10 just remember feeling something change and thinking we hit Sandy
11 debris, it felt like.

12 Q. Okay. So, and the Sandy debris you're thinking about,
13 you think may -- may have been on the bottom?

14 A. Yeah. I was imagining it was submerged because of I
15 could see how low tide it was, that maybe, you know, the tide and
16 the debris -- again, it was sticking up higher than normal.

17 Q. All right. Okay. Anything else?

18 A. That's it. Thanks, Mike.

19 Q. Okay. Thank you very much, Rosemary.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. All right.

22 A. Bye-bye now.

23 MR. KARR: So, it's 10:43 and I'm going to end this
24 recording.

25 (Whereupon, at 10:43 a.m., the interview was concluded.)

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 Rosemary Courtney

DOCKET NUMBER: DCA-13-MM-005

PLACE:

DATE: January 11, 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.

Karen M. Galvez
Transcriber