

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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IN RE: :

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THE FIRE THAT OCCURRED ON : NTSB Accident No.

THE CARIBBEAN FANTASY ON : DCA16FM052

AUGUST 17, 2016 :

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INTERVIEW OF: JENNIFER GAASI

Saturday,

August 20, 2016

Conference Room

USCG Sector San Juan

Puerto Rico

BEFORE

MICHAEL KARR, NTSB

CARRIE BELL, NTSB

[REDACTED] USCG

LT [REDACTED] [REDACTED] USCG

This transcript was produced from audio provided

by the National Transportation Safety Board.

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of American Cruise:

CARLOS BAYRON, ESQ.
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On Behalf of the P&I Club:

JOSE RAMON RIVERA-MORALES, ESQ.

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1
2 MR. KARR: This is Mike Karr of the National
3 Transportation Safety Board. It is August 20th. We're
4 at the conference room of Sector San Juan. And we're
5 going to interview the Chief Purser, Jennifer Gaasi.
6 I'll have everybody at the table introduce themselves
7 beginning to my left.

8 MS. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] U.S. Coast
9 Guard.

10 MR. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] United States Coast
11 Guard.

12 MS. BELL: Carrie Bell, NTSB.

13 MS. GAASI: Jennifer Gaasi, Chief Purser
14 from Caribbean Fantasy.

15 MR. KARR: All right. Thank you. And could
16 you begin by telling us, give us a history of your
17 involvement with the maritime industry.

18 MS. GAASI: I've been working on a cruise
19 ship for 22 years. And actually this is my first time
20 to work in a ROLLO passenger cruise ship. I embark or I
21 sign on with Baja Ferries (phonetic) first. I was on
22 the Baja Ferries because the ship was in dry dock. So
23 I embark on May 18, May 19 sorry, in (inaudible) and we
24 were dry dock.

25 And therefore, about two months I spent dry

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1 dock because we went to Gibraltar and then Cadiz. Then
2 finally we reach in Santo Domingo and stayed there.
3 And we came here in Puerto Rico. And that's it.

4 MR. KARR: Well before, with all those years
5 you did, how did you get your start? And give me an
6 idea what different positions you held over the --

7 MS. GAASI: Okay. I started, when I started
8 to work on the ship I was like one year as a bar
9 waitress. And I was promoted to Third Purser. And
10 then after three months I was promoted to Crew Purser,
11 being a Second Purser which I'm dealing all the
12 immigration, customs process and taking care of all the
13 passports and all documents of the crew members.

14 And then I became also a Chief Purser which
15 I'm dealing the passenger clearance as well which the
16 same thing that I'm doing it here. And the income
17 sales on the ship. And that's the one. It's the same
18 that I'm doing it like from the beginning that I
19 started to be a purser. It's the same responsibility
20 that I'm doing until now.

21 MR. KARR: In all your years that you were
22 serving, have you ever been involved in an actual
23 emergency such as this?

24 MS. GAASI: Yes. When I was in Texas for
25 five years, I was the Chief Purser. We had like a bomb

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1 threat. But we gathered all the passengers but we
2 reached the port. It's just like a false alarm bomb
3 threat. And we took all the life jacket, we took all
4 the passports as well. And it didn't go through.

5 And this is the second time that I had like,
6 I got involved with this evacuation. And it's my first
7 time that we evacuated. Like we need to evacuate all
8 passengers, all the crew members. That we were all
9 nervous when the last minute because I never had an
10 experience like this.

11 But I was like calm from the beginning.
12 When we had that incident happen before we reach in
13 Puerto Rico, nothing (inaudible). And I helped them to
14 do the evacuate all the passengers.

15 And it's like nothing for me. It's like I
16 didn't feel like nervous like that because I know that
17 it will be okay. Everything will be okay. You know,
18 we will be able to evacuate all the passengers and crew
19 members. We are all safe. That's the only one thing
20 that, and also the documents.

21 One thing that it came to my mind is the
22 documents of all the crew members. That's the only one
23 thing, the most important. And the money for the
24 company.

25 Even though they didn't expect that I was

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1 able to get everything, but I was. You know, my mind
2 is like clear during that incident that happened. Like
3 I know what to do even though I left my personal things
4 in the office. But best thing is to save all my
5 documents, that's all.

6 MR. KARR: Well tell us how you did that.
7 You know, kind of give us, if you can, remember the
8 times, if you can remember any times.

9 MS. GAASI: Okay.

10 MR. KARR: And tell us the sequence of
11 events for how you took care of the crew's documents
12 and the money and anything else that you had
13 responsibility for.

14 MS. GAASI: Okay. At 7:30 I was upstairs on
15 the way to the Captain's office supposed to be, to get
16 a signature. And then I heard Mr. (inaudible) at 7:29
17 or 7:30 in the morning.

18 And then I went back and like, crew members,
19 I saw them, like they were running. And then I went
20 down to the office like calm. I went to the office.
21 And then I told to my two receptionists who were on
22 duty at that time at the reception, I said did you
23 hear? Yes, okay, just stay calm.

24 So I went to the office. I went to the
25 office and, you know, like when they said Mr.

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1 (inaudible), I think like Garage C (phonetic) that they
2 said. And then just come down. And I went to the
3 office, continue working. You know, because they will
4 solve that and we will wait for further instruction.

5 And then the Hotel Director went to the
6 office. So but he's calm also. And I said yes, okay.
7 And then after 15 minutes I just heard that the fire
8 screen door closed like beside my office.

9 And then I open it and then I went to listen
10 what was going on on the radio. Because we were using
11 another channel for the hotel department than for the
12 deck and engine. So I went to the reception and I
13 stayed there until I heard the signal already
14 continuously. And then we need to evacuate.

15 So Hotel Director gave us instruction.
16 Okay. We need to evacuate. We need to clear the
17 reception, clear all the passengers, tell them to go up
18 to their muster stations. So I helped them first.

19 And then I told the Hotel Director, sir I
20 have to get the bag and take out all my documents. And
21 said go, go, go. So I asked the help of the Food
22 Manager and the FNB Controller to help me out because I
23 cannot carry the bags by myself.

24 So when I opened my safe, I took, I just put
25 all together all the passports, all the documents that

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1 I have inside, and the money. Well the money, the
2 paper only, the one that I can carry. Because the
3 coins I cannot carry anymore. It's heavy.

4 So I told those two guys please stay with me
5 all the time because you have all the documents. So I
6 stand by on Deck 7 for further announcement or for, you
7 know, instruction.

8 And then the safe, the officer called me on
9 the radio. Where's my location? So I told her that I
10 am on Deck 7 port side. And then I said you have the
11 crew lists and the passenger manifests? I said yes, I
12 do have. So they took that one.

13 So I took whatever -- because I have it
14 ready. I just grab all the papers from my port papers
15 to arrive here in Puerto Rico. So I took all of them
16 because I have plenty of copies that they're going to
17 need.

18 And then we were standby, standby. And then
19 I saw already, we were like checking. They started the
20 Lifeboat Number 2. And then on the other side,
21 starboard side, they also started to, you know, like
22 embark all the passengers.

23 So they use only like the Lifeboat 2 and the
24 Lifeboat Number 1 that I saw because I was standing by
25 by the Deck 7 port side. Because I know that I'll be

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1 the last one.

2 And then when we finish already the
3 passengers embark in lifeboats, like you know, crew
4 members said you have to go. I said no, I'll be the
5 last one to get. I know that I'll be the last one to
6 disembark.

7 So I have to wait until the last minute.
8 It's not the last, last minute. We almost finish like
9 evacuate all the passengers. And then they ask to go
10 down and go to the life raft.

11 And then we were standby again for about 15
12 to 20 minutes. And all passengers were very upset
13 because it was very hot. So I sat down there until
14 they call me up.

15 They called me again, the Hotel Director
16 called me, where was my location? And then please go
17 to the life raft now. So I went there and stayed
18 there. But it's like a lot of passengers that they are
19 like screaming, they were upset.

20 And then when I was passing by I said why?
21 Okay, so I told the guys who were in charge with the
22 life raft let the passengers go first. But some of the
23 passengers, they cannot go down because it's very steep
24 to, you know, the slide going to the platform.

25 So they standby. And then they told me -- I

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1 was nervous too at the beginning that I cannot go down.
2 But I told these guys with the documents, I said please
3 after I go down, please go down as well because I
4 cannot leave the passports. You know, I cannot go and
5 leave without all my documents with me.

6 So then the Safety Officer just, you're
7 going to be okay. So I went down. I had to wait on
8 the platform. And they asked me to go to the U.S.
9 Coast Guard boat. They told me, I said no. I have to
10 wait for the two to come down.

11 And then they called me again on the radio.
12 So I asked -- by the way, when I was on the Deck 7 that
13 I did not go to the life raft yet, I reported that all
14 documents have been secured.

15 And then when I evacuated and I reached the
16 platform, I called the command center and I told them
17 that all documents have been evacuated. And now they
18 asked me to count how many crew members in the
19 platform.

20 And then they asked me Jenny, you need to go
21 to the boat with the Coast Guard. You need to go, you
22 need to go. Because I was like rolling inside and I
23 was so wet already. So now I went finally.

24 So that was the last one until I reached the
25 port. I reached the port where they got us.

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1 MR. KARR: Go ahead.

2 MS. GAASI: And that's it. So we have to
3 wait. And then we went to the terminal. We went to
4 the terminal. And then after probably 20 minutes, the
5 immigration officer called me. And they asked me, you
6 don't have the passports? I said I got all the
7 passports sir. Okay.

8 So they gave me all the forms and explain it
9 to me for the, you know, you have to divide for the
10 crew members without a visa and the crew members with a
11 visa. So he explained it to me what to do. I asked
12 them to give out. I gave instruction.

13 And then after one hour in the terminal, we
14 went to the hotel which I did not get all the passports
15 because they were still processing. So I just got some
16 of the passport before I left the terminal. And that's
17 it.

18 MR. KARR: Tell me about when you left the
19 Coast Guard boat until you got to the hotel. Tell me
20 what sort of procedures or check ins that you went
21 through.

22 MS. GAASI: When we got off from the Coast
23 Guard boat they, you know, are you okay? And they put
24 this thing and I said yes. Okay, you have to go there,
25 you go there. And they gave us water.

1 And then everybody like approached me,
2 Jenny, Jenny, and they hugged me from the terminal.
3 And said are you okay, are you okay? Yes, yes, yes.
4 So they brought us to this bus, all of us. And they
5 brought us to the terminal.

6 And then after like 20 minutes, like I said
7 earlier, the immigration gave me those forms. And then
8 I separated the crew members. I explained it to them
9 what to do. And for the visa, the crew members that
10 doesn't have visa, we're going to change the status
11 into peril for the time being until we're going to get
12 all the flight details to depart from the U.S.

13 And then probably we stayed for, in the
14 terminal for at least three hours before we went to the
15 hotel. And that's it. Because it's a lot, like they
16 need to be cleared, they need to clear us first and
17 change the status. That's why it takes so long for us
18 to do it with immigration. And then we need to leave
19 and go to the hotel.

20 It's like, it took so long for us to reach
21 the hotel because they need to divide all crew members.
22 There is another hotel and one half is going to another
23 hotel. And that's it.

24 MR. KARR: Do you know why they put bands on
25 your wrists?

1 MS. GAASI: Probably so that they will know
2 who are the crew members. That's all that I know.
3 They just put the green thing. They didn't tell me
4 anything. They just put that on.

5 MR. KARR: All right. And who was
6 processing you in? Was it company employees?

7 MS. GAASI: No. It was -- I can't remember
8 what they --

9 MR. KARR: Okay. All right. How long -- do
10 you remember what time you actually slid down the
11 slide, left the ship?

12 MS. GAASI: If I'm not mistaken, at around
13 11:00.

14 MR. KARR: How long do you think you were up
15 on Deck 7 waiting to evacuate?

16 MS. GAASI: For about two hours.

17 MR. KARR: Were passengers with you at that
18 location?

19 MS. GAASI: There were some passengers and
20 crew members also on that location. And I just told
21 them that they were on line to that Lifeboat Number 2.

22 MR. KARR: They were in line to Lifeboat
23 Number 2?

24 MS. GAASI: Yes, to evacuate.

25 MR. KARR: Which is on the port side?

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1 MS. GAASI: Port side, yes.

2 MR. KARR: And I was on the ship briefly
3 yesterday. Where on Deck 7 were you? Give me some
4 landmarks. Is that the deck with the life rafts?

5 MS. GAASI: Yes.

6 MR. KARR: Okay. All right. So where were
7 you in relationship to the life rafts that were on the
8 port side?

9 MS. GAASI: I'm sorry?

10 MR. KARR: Where were you located?

11 MS. GAASI: At that time that I standby on
12 the port side sir, near the Lifeboat Number 2.

13 MR. KARR: Near Lifeboat Number 2?

14 MS. GAASI: Yes.

15 MR. KARR: Okay. All right. Other than it
16 being hot on deck, was there any smoke or anything else
17 that made it uncomfortable to be there for two hours?

18 MS. GAASI: No.

19 MR. KARR: Did you see any smoke going
20 anywhere?

21 MS. GAASI: Yes. It's like from the engine
22 it's coming out. And then when we look at the thing,
23 it's smoking, like smoke coming out from Deck 5. And
24 then all crew members, they look and said it's going up
25 to Deck 6 already. That's what they said.

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1 And I look at it. It's still on Deck 5.
2 And then we saw like coming out already on Deck 6. And
3 then I said I hope that it will not go up on Deck 7.
4 But after we were on Deck 7, they asked, they
5 instructed us to go down to Deck 6. And we go to that
6 life raft.

7 MR. KARR: Say that again. So in your
8 muster, what boat were you supposed to be on?

9 MS. GAASI: Lifeboat Number 1.

10 MR. KARR: And why weren't you on Lifeboat
11 Number 1?

12 MS. GAASI: Okay. I was there on Lifeboat
13 Number 1. But it's a lot of passengers that were
14 there. So I was like back and forth, back and forth,
15 back and forth like this. So even though I go on that
16 one, I said I'm supposed to be on lifeboat but it's a
17 lot of people. It was really, really crowded.

18 And I know it's all passengers there. They
19 were panicking, you know, like they're all crying. And
20 like, they felt dizzy. You know, so I said I'm going
21 to standby here for the time being.

22 And then the Lifeboat Number 2, that's where
23 that I saw that they were evacuating all passengers.
24 And then I went to the other side after they evacuated
25 or they put in Lifeboat 2 all the passengers. I went

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1 to my lifeboat, to my Lifeboat Number 1.

2 And now they put, well they were instructed
3 again to go down again and take the life raft. Please
4 fall in line and go to the life raft. And then we
5 waited there again.

6 And then Staff Captain -- when we went down
7 there, I thought we were going to take the life raft
8 there as well. But the Staff Captain said what are you
9 doing here? You have to go down. So we went down.

10 And then after waiting for 20 minutes there,
11 they called me on the radio that I need to go to the
12 life raft and take all my documents. But I did not,
13 even though I reached the life raft where I'm going to.
14 But I have to wait for another 30 minutes because I
15 have to let the passengers because they were panicking.

16 So until we finish already all the
17 passengers, that was the time that I went down. And
18 the rest of the crew members followed me already.

19 MR. KARR: Who in the ship made the
20 decision, you know, how did you know not to get into
21 Lifeboat Number 1?

22 MS. GAASI: How did I know?

23 MR. KARR: What I'm looking at is you were
24 assigned to Lifeboat Number 1.

25 MS. GAASI: Yes.

1 MR. KARR: So who told you not to go into
2 Lifeboat --

3 MS. GAASI: No one told me not to go in
4 Lifeboat Number 1. I just want for me, is I don't want
5 to go to the Lifeboat Number 1 because it's a lot of
6 passengers there. I want them to go first. And I know
7 that I'm going to be the last one to go in.

8 MR. KARR: Did you take any, were you with
9 any other crew members who were supposed to be in Boat
10 Number 1 and you said let's let the passengers go
11 first?

12 MS. GAASI: These two, the one that was with
13 me, I think they are on the life raft, the Food
14 Manager. Because I did not ask them. But they just,
15 the Hotel Director just told me to, you know, to be
16 with these two guys. But I told the Safety Officer
17 that I'm on Lifeboat Number 1 but I'm here standing by
18 here. And then yes, okay.

19 But I went back. Even though I know that
20 I'm assigned to Lifeboat Number 1, and I know that I
21 need to evacuate on that boat. But as I said earlier,
22 it's a lot of passengers. They were all panicking
23 there. And I don't want to stand by there. And I had
24 my all documents.

25 If I'm going to lose these two guys because

1 of the passengers panicking, I cannot, you know, I
2 cannot lose these two guys with the documents. You
3 know, if they're going to leave somewhere, I want them
4 to be with me all the time because of those documents.

5 MR. KARR: When you use the term standby,
6 does that have any particular meaning?

7 MS. GAASI: Nothing, just standby waiting
8 for further instruction.

9 MR. KARR: All right. And you mentioned,
10 you just mentioned within the past two or three
11 minutes, you said that someone directed the passengers
12 to go to the life rafts.

13 MS. GAASI: Yes.

14 MR. KARR: Tell me about that.

15 MS. GAASI: I don't know. It was all the
16 crew members, like the entertainers, I just saw them.
17 You have to go there, you have to go there, you have to
18 go to the life rafts. Please help all those
19 passengers.

20 So all the passengers passed by from that
21 Lifeboat Number 1 and 3. They just passed by in front
22 of me. And then they went to the life rafts. I don't
23 know who gave them instruction to go to the life raft.

24 MR. KARR: Did you hear it?

25 MS. GAASI: No.

1 MR. KARR: So how did you --

2 MS. GAASI: It's just, I think somebody just
3 went there and told them please go in line and go to
4 the life raft. So I just saw then that they were
5 passing and go to the life rafts.

6 MR. KARR: All right. During the -- what's
7 your role during the emergency?

8 MS. GAASI: I'm like with the Hotel Director
9 at the reception evacuating passengers.

10 MR. KARR: Did you do that during this
11 evolution?

12 MS. GAASI: Yes. I helped them first. And
13 I helped them first for that. First I said now that we
14 do help. And then I stayed with Hotel Director. And
15 then all the housekeeping, please guide all the
16 passengers Hotel Director said.

17 So we got all the passengers to go to their
18 muster station. And then when almost cleared, I called
19 Hotel Director, sir I have to go and get my bag and get
20 all my documents, go, go, go. So I have to call these
21 men and they helped me. And then I went up already.

22 MR. KARR: So is that the standard operating
23 procedure, that you'll help evacuate everyone? And
24 then once they're all evacuated, then you'll get the
25 money and the documents?

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1 MS. GAASI: Yes, sir.

2 MR. KARR: Did you have a list of passengers
3 that was supposed -- let me rephrase that. Did you
4 have a list that identified every passenger that was
5 onboard that ship?

6 MS. GAASI: Like a passenger list sir?

7 MR. KARR: Yes.

8 MS. GAASI: I brought it with me. But all
9 of them, they took it from me already. Like everybody
10 asking --

11 MR. KARR: Well my question is, if I asked
12 you did that list include everyone that was on that
13 ship at the time of the fire and only those people that
14 were on the ship at the time of the fire --

15 MS. GAASI: Well sir, before we always leave
16 from the port, okay, we are getting the passenger list
17 from the Terminal Supervisor. They're the one who is
18 going to, you know, get and they're counting all the
19 passengers. That's the only time that I could, you
20 know, I will know how many passengers get in on the
21 time. So it's only -- and we charge only for the
22 passenger list sir.

23 MR. KARR: Well do you create the passenger
24 list or does somebody hand it to you?

25 MS. GAASI: They're sending it to me, sir.

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1 They're sending it to me through email, sir.

2 MR. KARR: All right. And tell me what you
3 understand that list is based upon. And particularly,
4 what I'm saying is it everybody that made reservations
5 and some of those people may not have shown up? Or is
6 it confirmed, we gave them tickets or, you know, we
7 know somehow they checked in? So you have a list of
8 everybody that checked in?

9 MS. GAASI: Yes.

10 MR. KARR: Help me understand the process.

11 MS. GAASI: Okay. As far as I get because I
12 never work in the terminal sir. Okay. They're giving
13 me two different passenger lists. Like if we reach
14 Puerto Rico, they're sending me the passenger list on
15 I418 form. And they're giving me a passenger list with
16 how many cars, you know, we have and how many
17 containers.

18 So I cannot tell you if that passengers that
19 on the list is like exactly that they came aboard. But
20 because, as far as I know, once they go to check in,
21 they're going to go inside. They're going to go
22 inside, like do the embarkation already. They're
23 checking in.

24 Before they can come inside they check in
25 already. Let's say they started at 3:00 p.m. to do

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1 like check in all the passengers. And then they will
2 start going inside. And also, there's a security that
3 they have the clicker that they're counting all the
4 passengers coming inside.

5 MR. KARR: Do you know of any way that the
6 clicker is matched up with the passenger list?

7 MS. GAASI: Because they always ask me.
8 Security they're always reporting to me. Even though
9 the crew members, they're reporting to me that they are
10 onboard, for the passenger list, they always ask me how
11 many passengers. So I don't know if it is like matched
12 with the clicker.

13 MR. KARR: So you don't know because --

14 MS. GAASI: I don't see it.

15 MR. KARR: You don't match the clicker with
16 the thing? They want to know how many people, the
17 clicker people want to know --

18 MS. GAASI: Yes, how many passengers.

19 MR. KARR: -- that are on your list. And
20 who does the clicking? Is it your company?

21 MS. GAASI: Yes, under ACF but there are
22 concessionaires sir, security guard.

23 MR. KARR: Okay. Do you have any idea why
24 the rescue boat wasn't used?

25 MS. GAASI: I have no idea sir.

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1 MR. KARR: Okay. Do you have any idea why
2 Lifeboat Number 3 was not able to be released into the
3 water?

4 MS. GAASI: No idea.

5 MR. KARR: Do you know why the marine
6 evacuation system on the port side was not used?

7 MS. GAASI: I have no idea sir.

8 MR. KARR: Over the two hours, did you
9 observe how -- I'm looking for who and how, I guess.
10 I've heard that -- well let me put it this way. Like
11 you, where you were supposed to be in Lifeboat Number
12 1, do you know who decided that let's just load
13 everybody as best we can? So you know, did they fill
14 up the boats?

15 I guess from talking to other people -- let
16 me just ask you this. I heard that people that were
17 supposed to be in Boat Number 1, Boat Number 2, or in
18 different life rafts did not end up in Boat Number 1,
19 Boat Number 2, Boat Number 3. So can you give me any
20 inkling as to what you know of that actually happened?

21 MS. GAASI: Sir, to tell you honestly, I
22 don't know if for that Lifeboat Number 1, as far as I
23 know it's only the one that were going to be with me
24 there is the Chief Electrician -- and who was the other
25 one? I can't remember because every time that we have

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1 a drill -- and then supposed to be, I think, the Second
2 Engineer that's supposed to be there as well. Yes
3 because every time that I get --

4 But I didn't see them that time of accident,
5 sir. It's like I didn't even see if they were in
6 Lifeboat Number 1 to evacuate because I went to port
7 side first. But you know, everybody asking me, where
8 are you? I said I'm Lifeboat Number 1.

9 So I went there, it's a lot, like all
10 passengers who were there. They put all the passengers
11 in there on that lifeboat. So that's why I went on the
12 other side. I didn't even see who, you know, those
13 assigned to Lifeboat Number 1 if they were there or
14 they evacuated the same lifeboat that they were
15 assigned.

16 MR. KARR: When you were on Deck 7 for those
17 two hours, was that your muster station?

18 MS. GAASI: No. My muster station is muster
19 station A sir.

20 MR. KARR: All right. And where was --

21 MS. GAASI: That is the Lifeboat Number 1.

22 MR. KARR: Where you waited at Deck 7, is
23 that any kind of a muster station?

24 MS. GAASI: No, sir.

25 MR. KARR: Did you notice any passengers get

1 injured?

2 MS. GAASI: No, they just like, I just
3 noticed like they were only like dizzy and fainted,
4 that's all. Three passengers that I saw they were
5 fainted.

6 MR. KARR: All right. [REDACTED] I'm going to
7 turn it over to you to ask questions.

8 MR. [REDACTED] This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the
9 United States Coast Guard. When you said that some of
10 the passengers couldn't go down the marine evacuation
11 system because it was too steep, what did you mean by
12 that? If you could describe what you saw.

13 MS. GAASI: It's like this and they were
14 afraid.

15 MR. [REDACTED] Do you know why the MES was like
16 that?

17 MS. GAASI: No. When I was at the back,
18 those crew members told me (inaudible) is very, very
19 steep and so windy, maybe you cannot go down. They
20 told me. I said really? So I felt nervous. I didn't
21 see it yet.

22 But when I got the chance to look at it, I
23 said, that's why when I looked at it I said I hope that
24 I can go down in the thing. And then it's like moving,
25 moving. So passengers, they're going to go, they're

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1 going to back out. And they're going to say in Spanish
2 I can't, I can't do it.

3 MR. [REDACTED] And just to be clear, are we
4 talking about the port side MES or the starboard side
5 MES?

6 MS. GAASI: When I went down, I think it's
7 port side.

8 MR. [REDACTED] The port side MES?

9 MS. GAASI: Yes.

10 MR. [REDACTED] Did you see anybody go down the
11 port side MES?

12 MS. GAASI: No.

13 MR. [REDACTED] No? So you saw it just coming
14 down?

15 MS. GAASI: Yes. Because I always at the
16 back. Because passengers, they want to go (inaudible).
17 So I just saw it only when it's my, you know, turn to
18 go down.

19 MR. [REDACTED] So that was how you eventually
20 ended up getting off the ship, was you used the
21 starboard side marine evacuation system?

22 MS. GAASI: Yes.

23 MR. [REDACTED] And then down onto the platform?

24 MS. GAASI: Yes.

25 MR. [REDACTED] And then from the platform into a

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1 raft? Or onto a vessel?

2 MS. GAASI: Onto the U.S. Coast Guard.

3 MR. [REDACTED] So you think that you were on
4 deck standing by waiting at your muster station for
5 about two hours waiting to go down the MES and evacuate
6 the vessel?

7 MS. GAASI: Yes. Because for me, like I
8 waited there because I know it's still a lot of
9 passengers that they need to evacuate. I waited
10 because I was not in a hurry to go down or insisted to
11 go down because I know that I'm the last one. I'm the
12 last one. It's always the last one that I have to
13 evacuate.

14 But I was just instructed from the radio
15 that I have to go to the life raft. But it didn't, I
16 still have to wait for 30 minutes, 45 minutes before I
17 got up because it's still a lot of passengers.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Why do you think it took so long
19 to evacuate the vessel?

20 MS. GAASI: I have no idea.

21 MR. [REDACTED] I mean, it seems like from what
22 you're telling me you were kind of all over the ship.
23 Right? You're helping here, you're helping there.

24 MS. GAASI: Yes.

25 MR. [REDACTED] You're helping all over

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1 everywhere you possibly can.

2 MS. GAASI: Yes, yes.

3 MR. [REDACTED] So you were really able to really
4 put eyes on a lot of different moving parts of the
5 evacuation.

6 MS. GAASI: Yes. It's like when they were
7 putting all the passengers in Lifeboat Number 2, I just
8 saw them that they put it. And then they're trying to
9 cut something. And then that's Lifeboat Number 2 that
10 it took so long to go down. I don't know what
11 happened. I did not even ask because I was like -- so
12 I saw it, you know, like in front of the Lifeboat
13 Number 2. And then finally they went down. They went
14 down.

15 And then I don't know what they cut. And
16 then the U.S. Coast Guard approached them, approached
17 them when they went down. And then that's it that I
18 saw it.

19 MR. [REDACTED] Did you have any, were you able
20 to see any of the evacuation process for any of the,
21 for the Boat Number 1? Or for, or how much of the MES
22 evacuation did you see on the starboard side?

23 MS. GAASI: I did not see it. As I said, I
24 was on the port side. Even though I have to go around
25 to check but I cannot pass by to go to my Lifeboat

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1 Number 1.

2 MR. [REDACTED] So what were you doing on the
3 port side?

4 MS. GAASI: I was like standing by.
5 Supposed to be, I was supposed to go to that line
6 because they said you need to evacuate. So I was
7 supposed to go to that Lifeboat Number 2. But it's a
8 lot of passengers, it's full already. And it's a lot
9 of crew members. Not only me, it's a lot of crew
10 members they were with me on that port side.

11 And then, when I go around, that's why I
12 said I have to go around because I cannot go inside the
13 ship to go through inside and go to my Lifeboat Number
14 1. So they said that you're going to go. So I have to
15 go around the ship. But I cannot pass by. It's a lot
16 of passengers, crew members in front of Lifeboat Number
17 1 that I cannot get in.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So you're in line to get
19 into the lifeboat? Right?

20 MS. GAASI: Yes.

21 MR. [REDACTED] How close did you make it to the
22 lifeboat before either -- let me rephrase that. How
23 close did you make it to the lifeboat before -- because
24 it sounds like you made the decision to kind of pull
25 yourself out of the line and say I'm not going to get

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1 in this boat. Is that a correct statement?

2 MS. GAASI: Yes. Because for me, if I'm
3 going to wait in there, if I'm going to standby just
4 for me, nobody instructed me to do it. When I'm going
5 to be on the Lifeboat Number 1 and I know that they're
6 going to finish all the passengers, I let them go.

7 So I was like checking back and forth, back
8 and forth which one they get until they decided --
9 because it's a lot of crew members. Like they're
10 waiting, they're waiting in there. It's all over that
11 they're waiting on Deck 7.

12 And then they decided that go to the life
13 raft, go to the life raft. And then when we went to
14 the life raft and the Staff Captain, what are you
15 doing? You can't, you have to go down. So we need to
16 go down again. Go down and then that's where I went
17 out and waited with the life raft.

18 MR. [REDACTED] How often do you participate in
19 like the crew drill? Like the crew has a drill how
20 often? Every --

21 MS. GAASI: It's once a week.

22 MR. [REDACTED] Once a week? So we'll just say
23 there's four in a month. Out of four drills in a
24 month, how many would you participate in as the Chief
25 Purser?

1 MS. GAASI: Always.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Always? Okay. So as part of the
3 drill, would you board the lifeboats, boats go down in
4 the water? Does any of that ever happen?

5 MS. GAASI: No, never happened because we
6 came from a dry dock. And the time that was supposed
7 to have a drill, I think it was cancelled. I don't
8 know what happened. I think there was a problem. I
9 think the engine department cannot attend the drill so
10 they cancelled. And we did the boat drill but we did
11 not like try to go down in the water.

12 MR. [REDACTED] So how long were you on -- let me
13 rephrase this question. So had you, at any point in
14 the time that you'd been working on the Caribbean
15 Fantasy, ever been in a drill that was conducted in
16 such a way that you were able to not necessarily go
17 down but at least be accounted for in the boat?

18 MS. GAASI: Yes. Because the Second Officer
19 on the lifeboat -- okay. From the beginning when we
20 were still in dry dock, I was assigned in Lifeboat
21 Number 3. I was assigned in Lifeboat Number 3 but I
22 was not the leader or reporting how many crew members
23 were assigned there.

24 And then before we reach in Santo Domingo
25 after the dry dock, they changed my lifeboat by the

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1 Safety Officer. She changed it to Lifeboat Number 1.
2 And it's only one time that, you know, I went to that
3 lifeboat, Lifeboat Number 1 which is the leader is the
4 Second Officer.

5 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So when you arrived
6 onboard the ship and you received your initial
7 familiarization, you received that when?

8 MS. GAASI: I received it the same day.

9 MR. [REDACTED] The same day? Okay.

10 MS. GAASI: Yes.

11 MR. [REDACTED] So when you received that, as
12 part of that familiarization, were you shown this is
13 the boat that you report to? Or this is the raft that
14 you report to?

15 MS. GAASI: Yes. You know, they explained
16 all over.

17 MR. [REDACTED] And that was boat number what?

18 MS. GAASI: Boat Number 3.

19 MR. [REDACTED] Boat Number 3? All right. Now
20 if you look at the crew muster, what's your safety
21 number on the ship?

22 MS. GAASI: It's --

23 MR. [REDACTED] It's not important. On the
24 station bill in accordance with your safety number,
25 what lifeboat do you report to?

1 MS. GAASI: Because they said that has been
2 changed. They had been new muster list. Because I was
3 with a different Safety Officer when I arrived. And
4 then they promoted the other Safety Officer. And he
5 was the one who told me that this is your lifeboat,
6 this is like, you know --

7 And then they said that there's a new muster
8 list, that you're going to be assigned to a different
9 lifeboat. But before we left from the dry dock, Safety
10 Officer gave me a different card. And then I asked
11 her, I said did you change? And said, well it's the
12 same thing. You're going to be with the Hotel Director
13 but you're going to be in a different lifeboat.

14 MR. [REDACTED] So when the ship was in dry dock,
15 it had a station bill? And then when the ship left dry
16 dock, a new station bill was implemented in the vessel?
17 Is that what you're saying?

18 MS. GAASI: Well I don't know if they
19 implemented because she changed --

20 MR. [REDACTED] Let me rephrase. A new station
21 bill was brought to the vessel and say this is the new
22 station bill for the ship.

23 MS. GAASI: Yes.

24 MR. [REDACTED] And on that station bill, your
25 information, what you used to do for the emergency,

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1 what boat you used to go to, that changed from dry dock
2 to the day that this incident occurred?

3 MS. GAASI: Yes. When I arrived, I saw the
4 new one, the new one with the new signal. They just
5 told me this is the new one. And then that's the time
6 that they did not change but it will remain whatever
7 that they're using it before.

8 And then when we go back to operational,
9 we're going to change. But when Safety Officer just
10 gave me this thing, said this will be your new
11 lifeboat.

12 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So when you made the
13 decision to remove yourself from Lifeboat Number 1
14 because there was so many passengers and they were
15 panicked and they were crying, et cetera -- it was very
16 brave of you to do that. Did you tell anybody that you
17 were doing that?

18 MS. GAASI: The Hotel Director and the
19 Safety Officer knows it as well. Because he went there
20 to -- and I told her, the Safety, I'm on Lifeboat
21 Number 1 but I'm (inaudible). She said okay but, you
22 know, she was so busy already and go around. And I
23 said it's a lot of passengers, I was supposed to be
24 there. Okay. That's all she said.

25 MR. [REDACTED] All right. What I'm going to ask

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1 you right now is going to seem a little repetitive.
2 Okay. But like I said, you were a very busy person, a
3 very big key player during this exercise. So you were
4 kind of, you were all over. And somewhere along the
5 line, I kind of lost track of where you were.

6 So what I'd like to do is I just want to
7 write a quick list myself of when you had the documents
8 and you had the money and you reported to Lifeboat 1
9 because that's where you're supposed to go, correct?

10 MS. GAASI: Yes.

11 MR. [REDACTED] So the first place you went was
12 Lifeboat 1? And then you made the decision that you
13 were no longer going to be in Lifeboat 1. So then you
14 went where?

15 MS. GAASI: That's why they asked me on the
16 radio where is my location? Probably they cannot find
17 me on Lifeboat Number 1.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

19 MS. GAASI: So when the Safety Officer
20 called me, Jenny where is your location? I said I am
21 on Deck 7 port side. Okay. And then I just told her
22 that all documents has been secured. Okay.

23 And then they asked me Jenny, you have the
24 list of passenger and the crew list? Yes, I have
25 everything.

1 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So you went to Lifeboat 1.
2 You made the decision to not go into the lifeboat. And
3 then from Lifeboat 1, you took your documents and you
4 took the money and passports and you went to --

5 MS. GAASI: Just standby on the port side.
6 I did not go like, go to another boat.

7 MR. [REDACTED] So just give me some landmark on
8 the ship on the port side.

9 MS. GAASI: Because I was planning to go
10 back to Lifeboat Number 1.

11 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

12 MS. GAASI: Because some crew members also
13 that they were. And I told them, where are you? You
14 know, I said you have to go to assigned lifeboat or
15 assigned life raft, you have to go there. That's why
16 like already. And then I just went there. But I keep
17 on going back there to see if I can get in. But it's
18 still like a lot of passengers.

19 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So you went from Lifeboat
20 1 and then you went up to the port side and you were
21 standing by. And how long do you think you stayed
22 there before you went back to Lifeboat 1 again to see
23 if it was possible?

24 MS. GAASI: It's like every 30 minutes,
25 every 30 minutes. It's like three times that I went

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1 there.

2 MR. [REDACTED] So you went back? So it was on
3 the third time that you returned that you said, you
4 know what, I'm just not going to go in the boat?

5 MS. GAASI: No. When the third time, that
6 was the time that, you know, they said that okay, all
7 the passengers go down and go to the life raft. And
8 then when we were standing there, they said you have to
9 go and go to the life raft already. You have to leave
10 now, you have to leave now. That's all.

11 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So from Deck 7 port, you
12 made three trips back and forth between Lifeboat Number
13 1 and Deck 7 port?

14 MS. GAASI: Yes.

15 MR. [REDACTED] And then after it was decided
16 that the lifeboat was no longer a viable option, then
17 where did you go?

18 MS. GAASI: That's why I went to the life
19 raft which is one deck down.

20 MR. [REDACTED] Then you went to the starboard
21 marine evacuation system. Is that correct?

22 MS. GAASI: Yes, sir.

23 MR. [REDACTED] So then you went to the starboard
24 marine evacuation system. And from there did you stand
25 by?

1 MS. GAASI: Yes.

2 MR. [REDACTED] Or did you immediately go back?

3 MS. GAASI: I standby inside because, like
4 as I said, it's still a lot of passengers also there,
5 probably for about 20 minutes. Twenty minutes until
6 they call me on the radio, they're asking me where's
7 your location? And then I told them yes -- and I told
8 them, I said please go to the life raft. That's what I
9 heard from the Hotel Director instruction.

10 So when I went up, it's a lot of passengers.
11 They said that why are you going again? They said
12 okay, go ahead. So I have to back out and wait until
13 the passengers finish again.

14 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. But then you did not leave
15 from that location until you evacuated the ship? Once
16 you were there, you stayed there?

17 MS. GAASI: Yes.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you. So when you
19 got to shore, so you're on the Coast Guard boat. They
20 take you to the pier. You get off the pier. Now
21 you're in Puerto Rico, you're on land. Okay. And you
22 have all your documents.

23 You had made the statement, when I got
24 onshore they took the lists. And you were referring to
25 the passenger manifests. Okay. Who is they? Who took

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1 the lists?

2 MS. GAASI: In the terminal, the ladies a
3 lot of them that they were there. I don't know who are
4 they.

5 MR. [REDACTED] Is it company members? Is it
6 Customs and Border Protection, is it the police, is it
7 Coast Guard?

8 MS. GAASI: I think it's the terminal
9 employee, the one that they're taking.

10 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So the port employees?

11 MS. GAASI: Yes. And the immigration. And
12 then they brought one guy, I don't know which
13 (inaudible). They asked me, said do you have the list?
14 So like they're taking the lists. So I did not ask
15 them who are they? They just like kept on approaching
16 me and saying do you have the list?

17 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. So you gave the list over
18 to someone but we're not sure exactly who they
19 represent.

20 MS. GAASI: Yes.

21 MR. [REDACTED] I think that's all I have sir.

22 MR. KARR: All right. Carrie?

23 MS. BELL: I just have a few questions for
24 you. You said that you worked on the cruise ships for
25 22 years?

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1 MS. GAASI: Yes, ma'am.

2 MS. BELL: And how long have you been on the
3 Caribbean Fantasy?

4 MS. GAASI: Since May 19, 2016 only.

5 MS. BELL: That's the first time?

6 MS. GAASI: Yes, first time for this
7 company.

8 MS. BELL: And so when did you do your
9 familiarization training?

10 MS. GAASI: The same day, May. I arrived I
11 think around 2:00. And then after two hours they did
12 it.

13 MS. BELL: Okay. And then after it came out
14 of dry dock, did you have to do anything else to kind
15 of refresh your memory since you hadn't been on too
16 long?

17 MS. GAASI: Yes. Because when they did,
18 they went around, they showed me where is all the
19 location, the lifeboat, this is the thing. It's a kind
20 of, of course, because it's my first time on the ship
21 so I need to familiarize everything. They showed me
22 all over.

23 MS. BELL: Okay. And so you've been the
24 Chief Purser the entire time you've been on this ship?

25 MS. GAASI: Yes, ma'am, on this, yes ma'am.

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1 MS. BELL: Okay. And you said that you'd
2 had a false alarm on a previous trip.

3 MS. GAASI: I was in Texas. I was off
4 already at around 9:00 in the evening. And they, like
5 a bomb threat signal. And then I have to, you know, go
6 to my office. And then find all the security and find
7 the hotel manager as well. So we waited instruction.

8 And then they made an announcement that we
9 need to abandon. And I put, again, all my things. I
10 asked those security officers to help me out and carry
11 all the passports as well.

12 MS. BELL: On that --

13 MS. GAASI: Yes. We went up to the muster
14 stations and we reached the port. We are on the middle
15 because that is only a casino ship, that it goes only
16 from Texas to the middle of the sea and then we come
17 back. It's like back and forth. So we were able to
18 reach the port and evacuate all the passengers. So it
19 was a false alarm.

20 MS. BELL: Okay. But you did evacuate all
21 the passengers?

22 MS. GAASI: We did but we are in the port
23 already, like they disembarked.

24 MS. BELL: Okay. So about how long ago did
25 that happen?

1 MS. GAASI: I left 2008. Probably around
2 2007.

3 MS. BELL: Okay. So would you say that that
4 experience made you more prepared for this?

5 MS. GAASI: Yes because that was the first
6 time that I was like really, I don't know what to do.
7 It was my first time. But this one, I was cool. I
8 didn't even, you know, when I look at the crew members
9 that they were like drinking a lot of water, you know,
10 they were all nervous. But they say why aren't you
11 nervous? No, I'm calm, you know, because I'm brave.

12 MS. BELL: Because what?

13 MS. GAASI: I was brave.

14 MS. BELL: Okay. So you said that you had
15 two people that were helping you?

16 MS. GAASI: Yes.

17 MS. BELL: Were they with you every time you
18 moved from one location to another?

19 MS. GAASI: Yes ma'am. They did not leave
20 me. They did not leave me. They were with me all the
21 time.

22 MS. BELL: Now do you have anyone assigned
23 to help you in an emergency situation like that? You
24 just decided you needed them to help you?

25 MS. GAASI: Yes.

1 MS. BELL: Okay.

2 MS. GAASI: Yes. It's not (inaudible) but
3 it was like everyone, like they heard it. Because if I
4 have the documents and I told them that I had the Food
5 Manager and the FNB Controller. So they heard also
6 when they asked me to, you know, bring down all
7 documents to the life raft, please ask, you know, the
8 Food Manager to help you out to carry those things.

9 So they were with me all the time. I went
10 down to the platform first. But I had to wait for them
11 before they can go down. I want to make sure that they
12 have the bag with them with the documents.

13 MS. BELL: But in procedures, they're not
14 required to be with you?

15 MS. GAASI: Yes, exactly ma'am. That's
16 correct. That's correct.

17 MS. BELL: Okay. I'm just curious how, I
18 mean, in general that's a lot of things to carry.

19 MS. GAASI: Yes.

20 MS. BELL: Is it three separate bags?

21 MS. GAASI: It's two ma'am.

22 MS. BELL: Two bags? Okay. And you said
23 that when you went to reception, you heard a signal
24 continuously. What signal was that?

25 MS. GAASI: It's supposed to be like go to

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1 your muster station. That's the signal go to your
2 muster station. But when we heard that one, that's
3 while we're still evacuating all the passengers. And
4 then all of the passengers went up and all of the crew
5 members, they went up already.

6 And that's the time that I took all my
7 documents and I went up. And grabbed my life jacket as
8 well before I went to my muster station. There's no
9 announcement, it's just alarm.

10 MS. BELL: Okay. That's what I was looking
11 for. And you said that you knew you would be the last
12 to disembark? Why is that?

13 MS. GAASI: I don't know. Probably because
14 it's from the other vessel. That's the one that we
15 were instructed, that I'm the last one who is going to
16 disembark with the documents, like where the Captain is
17 supposed to be and all the officers. But they asked me
18 to, you know, expect that.

19 But I really don't expect that I will be the
20 really, really last one. You know, probably before the
21 Captain goes, they want me to go down. But it didn't
22 happen because it's still a lot of passengers going
23 down. But they asked me already, you have to do down.
24 So I went.

25 MS. BELL: And are you involved in the

1 normal safety drills that happen?

2 MS. GAASI: What do you mean?

3 MS. BELL: Do you have a weekly drill?

4 MS. GAASI: Yes, ma'am. I need to. So I
5 was assigned, it's the same thing. All of us, nobody
6 is like, there are no excuses. If we have a safety
7 drill that is scheduled to have a drill, general drill,
8 we need to attend. Everyone must attend.

9 MS. BELL: Okay. And you said that you
10 heard the fire screen close?

11 MS. GAASI: Yes.

12 MS. BELL: So where is your office located?

13 MS. GAASI: It's behind, Deck 5 behind the
14 reception. And there's a small fire screen door there.

15 MS. BELL: And what deck is that?

16 MS. GAASI: Deck 5.

17 MS. BELL: On Deck 5. And what kind of, do
18 you have to do some kind of training for -- when you
19 get the manifest list, about when do you get that?
20 After you've departed?

21 MS. GAASI: No, ma'am. I have to go to the
22 terminal an hour before we depart when they finish.
23 For example, we depart normally at 7:00 both Santo
24 Domingo and Puerto Rico. So we need to get in touch or
25 contact the Terminal Supervisor if they're done

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1 checking in. And if the passenger lists are ready,
2 then we need to go and pick it up.

3 MS. BELL: Okay. And do you keep that
4 somewhere in your office that other people can access
5 if they need it? Like if something would happen to you
6 in an emergency, does someone else have access to that?

7 MS. GAASI: Actually in the office ma'am, I
8 was not alone in the office. We do have the Food
9 Manager, we do have the Bar Manager and the FNB
10 Controller together with me in the office.

11 So they have their own keys that, you know,
12 they can open. If I'm not there, they can open the
13 office. And it's always on top of my desk, whatever
14 the documents, in case something happen to me.

15 MS. BELL: Okay. So do you use that
16 manifest list for anything? You take it with you?

17 MS. GAASI: Ma'am actually we're arriving
18 here in Puerto Rico, right. So I prepared that. At
19 7:00 already I prepared all my port papers which I'm
20 putting it on my desk, all of them, all the copies.
21 Because the night before I need to ask the Captain to
22 sign it.

23 So I make copies the night before. And then
24 7:00, I just want to make sure that everything is on my
25 desk. So that if all the immigration or customs or

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1 agriculture will come, I have it ready.

2 MS. BELL: Okay. And I thought I heard you
3 say something about a new signal at the muster. You
4 said you got a new muster station assignment.

5 MS. GAASI: It's just the lifeboat. It's
6 still the same for emergency, like emergency thing at
7 the reception. It's still with the Hotel Director to
8 evacuate the passengers. But the lifeboat, they
9 changed it from Lifeboat Number 3 since I was assigned
10 when I got to the ship. And they changed me to
11 Lifeboat Number 1.

12 MS. BELL: Okay. But the signal was not
13 different?

14 MS. GAASI: No, ma'am.

15 MS. BELL: Okay. I just wanted to clarify
16 that. That's all I have right now.

17 MR. KARR: All right. Thanks. I'd like to
18 learn about your personal experience of being at the
19 marine evacuation system and going down. You know, for
20 instance, you know, how long did you have to wait your
21 turn?

22 MS. GAASI: To go down?

23 MR. KARR: Yes. If you can tell me -- what
24 I'm looking at is, you know, how many people went down
25 the slide at a time.

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1 MS. GAASI: It's two.

2 MR. KARR: Two?

3 MS. GAASI: Yes.

4 MR. KARR: Did you go down the slide with
5 another person at the same time?

6 MS. GAASI: The one who going to go with me
7 supposed to be, I think he back out. He said he cannot
8 do it because he was crying. And then I still see, I
9 was like still sitting down on top because I saw there
10 was one crew member is still on the middle. And I
11 don't want to hit him so I have to wait.

12 The guy that was supposed to be with me, he
13 went back. And then there was another girl, another
14 girl that came down with me. And then when the other
15 crew member almost at the end by the platform that same
16 time because I made it like slowly.

17 So it took time for me to go down because I
18 don't want to like go -- it's steep.

19 MR. KARR: Who told you when it was time,
20 did anybody tell you when it was okay to go?

21 MS. GAASI: Yes. The Staff Captain was
22 there.

23 MR. KARR: All right. And then describe,
24 that person that was ahead of you that went down, can
25 you describe what that person did? I'm trying to get

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1 an idea of time. I'm trying to get an idea of what
2 happened to get an idea of the time.

3 So when that person got down to the bottom,
4 what did you watch that person do before you started
5 going down?

6 MS. GAASI: Like he was very, very slow to
7 do it. But when he almost like reached the end, I took
8 my chance to go there. You know, like I have to grab
9 like little by little so that I'm not going to go and
10 straight going there because I don't want to like hit
11 him when I'm going to go. Because they said just
12 spread your legs and then take time.

13 So I went down and he reach already. And I
14 was alone. Then I reach the end. And then the next
15 one again after me.

16 MR. KARR: Can you give me an idea of how
17 you went down?

18 MS. GAASI: That's where I got this.

19 MR. KARR: Oh let's see. So is that how you
20 --

21 MS. GAASI: I had to because, as I mentioned
22 like earlier, I was afraid. When I saw it was very
23 steep I said I can't. And then Safety Officer
24 approached and said Jenny, just grab this line and do
25 it little and spread your legs. So I took my shoes,

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1 you know, I put it in the plastic bag with someone
2 else. I said just bring my shoes.

3 And then when I grabbed the line and I
4 spread my legs, and then little by little, you know, I
5 did it. And then when I was on the middle, I was
6 nervous like coming down. But when I was on the middle
7 I said I can do it, I can do it.

8 So that's where I got my scratch because I
9 have to do it like, it took time for me to do it.

10 MR. KARR: Okay. Did it take a long time to
11 launch Lifeboat Number 1? I heard you say that every
12 half an hour you went back to Lifeboat Number 1. Was
13 it still there every time you went back?

14 MS. GAASI: It's a lot. I saw it the first
15 time, it's still there. The first time that I went
16 there, it was there. So they are like embarking all
17 the passengers.

18 Then after 30 minutes I said I'm going to
19 look. And then after 30 minutes, I went back. It's a
20 lot, like I cannot get in. I cannot go it even on the
21 other side. Even though if I went inside, it's plenty
22 of people there that I cannot, you know -- and then
23 when I went there on the other side, they still there
24 which I saw it. I saw that it's still there after 30
25 minutes, the Lifeboat Number 1.

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1 MR. KARR: After the first 30 minutes?

2 MS. GAASI: Yes.

3 MR. KARR: What about the next time you went
4 back?

5 MS. GAASI: The second one I did not even
6 see that one because it's like a lot of (inaudible)
7 that I cannot go in. When I went go around there, when
8 I go around there, it's a lot of them. It's a lot of
9 passengers, like passengers blocking the way so I
10 cannot see if the boat went down. But I heard it, the
11 boat went down already, the boat went down.

12 MR. KARR: Okay. All right. Were there any
13 verbal announcements, were there any announcements over
14 the PA system telling the passengers to come to their
15 muster stations?

16 MS. GAASI: Yes. I heard it but I don't
17 know what time was that.

18 MR. KARR: But you did hear a verbal
19 announcement that said go to muster?

20 MS. GAASI: Yes.

21 MR. KARR: At the same time as you heard the
22 seven shorts and one long?

23 MS. GAASI: Yes, yes.

24 MR. KARR: All right. And can you tell me
25 how, once people got to the muster station, how did

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1 people know to start getting into the lifeboats?

2 MS. GAASI: When I reached the Deck 7 --
3 well crew members, they're guiding all the passengers.
4 Like deck because I saw them, and then housekeeping,
5 they were guiding all the passengers to go to the
6 lifeboat stations. I saw them by the stairs. Because
7 when I was going up, I saw crew members there guiding
8 all the passengers, guide them go to the lifeboat
9 stations.

10 MR. KARR: All right. Can you describe, on
11 this trip when you left Santo Domingo, you left at
12 7:00, you know, the night before coming to San Juan.
13 Can you describe the safety orientation that was given
14 to the passengers?

15 MS. GAASI: The safety orientation actually
16 sir, they're making an announcement only from the
17 reception. Like the explanation to the passenger where
18 to get the life jacket and which muster station that I
19 think it is indicated, which muster station you belong.

20 MR. KARR: And where are the passengers when
21 that announcement is given?

22 MS. GAASI: They are in the dining room,
23 some of them they were in Deck 6. They were around
24 mostly like in the dining room. From like five minutes
25 or as soon as we depart, like two to five minutes,

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1 they're making the announcement already from the
2 reception.

3 MR. KARR: Are all the passengers supposed
4 to be in a particular area for that announcement?

5 MS. GAASI: No, sir.

6 MR. KARR: Okay. All right. Do passengers
7 ever watch, do passengers see someone put on a life
8 jacket? Or I should say this, does a crew member
9 demonstrate how to put on a life jacket?

10 MS. GAASI: That I don't know sir, who's
11 doing that by the reception.

12 MR. KARR: Okay. Bear with me a second.
13 Did you have any, on this cruise or on this voyage, did
14 you have any handicapped people that needed special
15 attention?

16 MS. GAASI: There were some, yes.

17 MR. KARR: Okay. What can you tell me about
18 how they were seen to during the evacuation?

19 MS. GAASI: It's only, during the
20 embarkation I could hear only the radio sir -- because
21 most of the time that I'm in the office. It's only
22 those receptionists that they are, you know, facing or
23 dealing with the needs of the passengers. But I could
24 hear only handicapped, they're calling the Chief
25 Housekeeper, if it is handicapped, they need wheelchair

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1 at the (inaudible).

2 MR. KARR: Did you actually have a list of
3 handicapped people?

4 MS. GAASI: No ma'am. I think it's only, I
5 don't know if they're giving it to the reception. But
6 normally, it's on my list. They never give me any list
7 for handicapped.

8 MR. KARR: So you didn't have a list? So
9 how did the crew know who to see?

10 MS. GAASI: Well I don't know if they're
11 giving it, if they have a different list onto whom
12 they're going to give the handicapped list. Or to the
13 Chief Housekeeper maybe.

14 MR. KARR: When you started talking to us,
15 you mentioned that this is the first time you're on a
16 RORO ship.

17 MS. GAASI: Yes.

18 MR. KARR: Any thoughts on --

19 MS. GAASI: It's a different standard
20 actually for the RORO list which is more issue for me.
21 Because here it's only 124. And I was dealing for 700
22 to 800 crew members.

23 MR. KARR: All right. Thanks. Anybody else
24 have any questions?

25 MR. [REDACTED] I do. You said that the, when

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1 your lifeboats -- I'm sorry. This is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with
2 the United States Coast Guard. You said that the
3 Safety Officer had given you a new safety card when
4 your lifeboat changed from Lifeboat 3 to Lifeboat
5 Number 1. Do you still have that safety card? Or is
6 it on the vessel?

7 MS. GAASI: I have it on top of my desk.

8 MR. [REDACTED] In your office on the ship?

9 MS. GAASI: Yes, in my office.

10 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. You said that the staff
11 that was at the marine evacuation system when you went
12 down, was he the one that directed you it's your turn?

13 MS. GAASI: Yes he was. And there were some
14 crew members also that, I think from the deck
15 department, two crew members with the Staff Captain
16 that were helping everyone. Because they're the one
17 who told me. Well Staff Captain was there and said
18 Jenny, go ahead. Because I'm like only four of us
19 there, crew members.

20 When I saw that no more passengers, said
21 Jenny you can go down now. So I went down.

22 MR. [REDACTED] Okay. Thank you. All right. I
23 have one last question. It's going to be a bit of an
24 open ended question. In the last few days since you've
25 been in Puerto Rico and you've been waiting patiently,

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1 thank you, have you had an opportunity to speak to any
2 of your friends or your colleagues that may have been
3 in one of the lifeboats or one of the life rafts during
4 the evacuation from ship to shore?

5 Not the people that went in the Coast Guard
6 boats but someone that was actually in a raft or in a
7 boat. Did you know anybody? Like any of your friends
8 or your coworkers that were evacuated in a raft or in a
9 lifeboat?

10 MS. GAASI: It's only the one, that guy,
11 because he came and complained to me about the Second
12 Officer. He just complained to me that what will
13 happen to my documents? And I said what happened? You
14 know that I was the leader from Lifeboat Number 3, that
15 it's cracked he said. And I said what happened? But
16 you were in the lifeboat. I said yes, you know what, I
17 bet it cracked. The boat cracked. So that's the only
18 one.

19 MR. [REDACTED] The lifeboat cracked?

20 MS. GAASI: Yes.

21 MR. [REDACTED] What do you mean the lifeboat
22 cracked?

23 MS. GAASI: I don't know what does he mean.
24 Like half, cut into half. I don't know.

25 MR. [REDACTED] And he was the commander for

1 Lifeboat Number 3?

2 MS. GAASI: Yes.

3 MR. [REDACTED] And he said that the lifeboat
4 cracked?

5 MS. GAASI: Yes.

6 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

7 MS. GAASI: Yes. That's why all his
8 belongings, all his documents he has his one bag and it
9 got wet. Because he was the one to complain from the
10 beginning when I was in the terminal. You know, I was
11 so wet and he was very upset, all my documents. You
12 know, who is going to pay for this? I said what
13 happened? I didn't know. He was the only one who told
14 me.

15 MR. [REDACTED] Oh so he had his backpack with
16 all his documents with him?

17 MS. GAASI: Yes.

18 MR. [REDACTED] Okay.

19 MS. GAASI: Yes, yes. And that was the only
20 time that I found out that. I said what happened? You
21 know, when we went down there the lifeboat cut into
22 half. And I said really? I didn't hear. I found out
23 only from him.

24 MR. [REDACTED] All right. Well that's all the
25 questions I have. So I'm going to close out by just

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1 congratulating you on a successful evacuation of the
2 ship.

3 MS. GAASI: Thank you.

4 MR. [REDACTED] Thank you for your time.

5 MS. BELL: I don't have any more questions.

6 MS. GAASI: Thank you very much.

7 MR. KARR: I have two more. So when you
8 were waiting to go down the MES, the evacuation system,
9 like that person who was afraid to go down with you,
10 how did that person leave the ship? Do you know?

11 MS. GAASI: Which one sir? That I don't
12 know if he came, like he finally decided to go down as
13 well sir.

14 MR. KARR: While you were waiting in line to
15 go down, did you see anybody else that was hesitant at
16 first and then --

17 MS. GAASI: No. Because I was like checking
18 all of them when they would go down. I stayed there
19 but I look at them. Everybody like went down and it
20 took time, so no one. After me, when I went down,
21 inside I didn't see anyone that they were hesitant to
22 go down.

23 MR. KARR: I've never gone down a slide like
24 that. Did anyone that went down go down really fast,
25 you know, like too fast?

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1 MS. GAASI: I think this girl from -- oh
2 yes, the guy that was helping me to carry the bag.
3 When he was go down, the next one, he is not like even
4 half. The girl, you know, hit him because she was too
5 fast. And I think they didn't give her instruction to
6 hold it.

7 So she was too fast and she hit, you know,
8 his hand. Because the guy was like it hurts. I said
9 what happened? Because I saw her when he hit her leg
10 to the arms of the other guy. And then he told the
11 girl, he said please hold on, hold on that one, let me
12 go down first. So she hold on and then she let him go
13 first.

14 So I think she did not hold, she did not
15 hold. That's why she went down very fast.

16 MR. KARR: All right. How did you get wet?

17 MS. GAASI: I was rolling in the platform.

18 MR. KARR: And how stable was the platform?

19 Was the platform moving up and down, moving around?

20 MS. GAASI: Yes. It's like this. It's
21 moving. So I cannot stand. Jenny sit down, they said.
22 And then water, when the boat from U.S. Coast Guard,
23 you know, near us to take all the crew members there,
24 all the water goes inside.

25 So if I'm going to stand up or like sit

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1 down, I'm still like rolling and rolling.

2 MR. KARR: Okay. How many people were on
3 the platform that helped you get from the end of the
4 slide to the Coast Guard boat?

5 MS. GAASI: Four of them.

6 MR. KARR: Four people helped you? Or were
7 they --

8 MS. GAASI: Two of them from the boat, the
9 U.S. Coast Guard boat. And then two of them, crew
10 members that they were helping all of the crew members
11 to put in. They stayed in the platform.

12 MR. KARR: Okay. All right. I have no more
13 questions. The last thing I'd like to ask you is, you
14 know, based on your experience of serving in the
15 maritime field, going through many drills and now
16 actually having gone through a real abandon ship, is
17 there anything that you'd like to mention to improve
18 maritime safety that we didn't ask about?

19 MS. GAASI: No. No comments.

20 MR. KARR: All right. No comments. Well
21 thanks for coming in to speak with us. We appreciate
22 it. And I will end -- it's 5:30 and I'm going to end
23 the recording right now.

24 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went
25 off the record at 5:30 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

MATTER: Fire Aboard Caribbean Fantasy
August 17, 2016
Accident No. DCA16FM052
Interview of Jennifer Gaasi

DATE: 08-20-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 61 inclusive are to the best of my professional ability a true, accurate, and complete record of the above referenced proceedings as contained on the provided audio recording; further that I am neither counsel for, nor related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action in which this proceeding has taken place; and further that I am not financially nor otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.



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