

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

-----:
   
IN RE: :
   
:
   
THE FIRE THAT OCCURRED ON : NTSB Accident
   
THE CARIBBEAN FANTASY THAT : No.DCA16FM052
   
OCCURRED ON AUGUST 17, 2016 :
   
:
   
-----:

INTERVIEW OF: CYNTHIA FLORIAN

Monday,
   
August 22, 2016

Conference Room
   
USCG Sector San Juan
   
Puerto Rico

BEFORE

MICHAEL KARR, NTSB
   
CARRIE BELL, NTSB
   
[REDACTED] USCG
   
LT [REDACTED] USCG
   
ANDRES PICO RAMIREZ, PI Club
   
ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ, USCG
   
JOUGE F. BLASINI, P&I Club

APPEARANCES:

On Behalf of American Cruise:

CARLOS BAYRON, ESQ.  
Bayron Offices

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

(9:41:22)

1  
2  
3 MICHAEL KARR: It's 1635 on August 22nd,  
4 2016. We are in the conference room at Sector San Juan  
5 conducting interviews for the Caribbean Fantasy fire.  
6 I'm Mike Karr with the NTSB. I would like to go to my  
7 right and have everybody at the table introduce  
8 themselves.

9 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the United States  
10 Coast Guard.

11 CARRIE BELL: Carrie Bell, NTSB

12 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Cynthia Florian.

13 ALFREDO RODRIGUEZ: US Coast Guard.

14 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] US Coast Guard.

15 MICHAEL KARR: All right. Thanks everyone.  
16 Cynthia is it okay if we record the interview?

17 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes, that's fine.

18 MICHAEL KARR: All right, thanks. The first  
19 think I'd like to ask you about is how long have you  
20 been -- how long have you been sailing with the  
21 Caribbean Fantasy?

22 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: I have only two weeks.

23 MICHAEL KARR: Two weeks? All right.

24 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

25 MICHAEL KARR: All right, how much time do

1 you have in the maritime industry?

2 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: About ten years.

3 MICHAEL KARR: Ten years?

4 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

5 MICHAEL KARR: All right, all right. And  
6 what type of ships have you been sailing on?

7 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Cruise ships.

8 MICHAEL KARR: Cruise ships, and what --

9 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: And ferry, it's the first  
10 time.

11 MICHAEL KARR: Okay. And what positions  
12 have you held on those vessels?

13 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: All season person.

14 MICHAEL KARR: And what I'd like you to do  
15 is, let's go right to the morning of the fire and tell  
16 us about everything you did and what you observed with  
17 regard to passengers, fire, smoke, getting in the  
18 lifeboats, mustering people. Tell us all about that,  
19 beginning with when you heard Mr. Skylight.

20 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Actually when I heard the  
21 signal I just woke up because I was sleeping at that  
22 time, so I just stayed on standby in my cabin because  
23 we didn't know what was going on. So, then after maybe  
24 10 minutes I heard the long, long blast which means to  
25 go up to the lifeboat stations.

1           And I heard the announcement that they have  
2 an emergency and we have to proceed, passengers and  
3 crew, to the lifeboat station. So then I got dressed  
4 and I proceeded to muster station A, which was my -- I  
5 am the leader there.

6           So, but when I reached there, everybody was  
7 already in that station. It was very crowded. So we  
8 started to calm the people and put them aside because  
9 the guys in charge of the lifeboat -- to launch the  
10 lifeboat number one, they have to prepare the boat.

11           The boat was above us, so we have to keep  
12 the people away in order to avoid any accident. So  
13 once the boat was along the ship ready to -- by the  
14 embarkation area, so we started to embark the women,  
15 kids, and handicap people.

16           So, we embarked like about maybe 120-130 to  
17 the boat. So, then they launched the boat and we  
18 proceeded to the next one. Because it was very crowded  
19 because there are two lifeboats on the starboard side,  
20 and I think it was better than the portside because  
21 they have only one lifeboat.

22           We started to give away also the life  
23 jackets to everybody who doesn't have a life jacket.  
24 And we have like faint people, I don't know the --

25           MICHAEL KARR: Pardon me?

1 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Faint, when the person --

2 CARRIE BELL: Dizzy, pass out?

3 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes. And so we take off  
4 the life jacket and give some air, so we called the  
5 doctor. So the doctor proceeded immediately there. So  
6 then we continued what we were doing with the people  
7 and embarked the next lifeboat. So, we were the last  
8 one to disembark the boat.

9 MICHAEL KARR: Well, you went after the  
10 lifeboat number -- after -- tell me what you did while  
11 people were getting into lifeboat number one.

12 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: What I did?

13 MICHAEL KARR: Yes, what role did you have  
14 as people were load -- getting loaded into number one?

15 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: We tried to get first the  
16 women and kids first.

17 MICHAEL KARR: Okay.

18 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: And we gave away also the  
19 life jacket. We put on the life jackets for those  
20 people that didn't have any.

21 MICHAEL KARR: And then after you finished  
22 lifeboat number one, where did you go?

23 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: To the next one, which is  
24 number three.

25 MICHEAL KARR: And tell me what you did

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 there.

2 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: The same --

3 (Simultaneous speaking)

4 MICHAEL KARR: Can you be more specific with  
5 -- tell me the same, anything unusual about number  
6 three compared to number one?

7 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No, nothing.

8 MICHAEL KARR: All right. And tell me about  
9 anything unusual about lifeboat number three?

10 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No.

11 MICHAEL KARR: Let me think about this.  
12 After you loaded lifeboat number three can you tell us  
13 what happened to lifeboat number three?

14 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Actually I didn't see that  
15 because after that we proceeded to the life raft  
16 station.

17 MICHAEL KARR: Okay.

18 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: They launched, so I don't  
19 know. I didn't see what happened.

20 MICHAEL KARR: So then after you left, tell  
21 me about what you did after you left lifeboat number  
22 three.

23 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: We went to the life raft  
24 station where they have the slide, I don't know how  
25 they call it -- and we also tried to keep the people

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 calm also because most of the men they tried to go  
2 inside first. And we tried also to get the kids,  
3 actually there weren't any more kids in the life raft,  
4 only woman. But they don't let woman to go first, you  
5 know, everybody wants to go at the same time. But we  
6 tried to keep that, you know.

7 MICHAEL KARR: And did you have any problems  
8 keeping everybody in order?

9 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Not really.

10 MICHAEL KARR: Okay, all right. And how did  
11 you eventually leave the boat? How did you eventually  
12 get off the boat?

13 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: That was almost at the  
14 end. We left only the crew members. All the  
15 passengers were already off the boat. We were the last  
16 ones.

17 MICHAEL KARR: All right, and how did you  
18 evacuate the boat?

19 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: By the slide.

20 MICHAEL KARR: Slide? And then once you got  
21 to the bottom what did you do?

22 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: There was like a small  
23 boat and we were transferred to a yacht.

24 MICHAEL KARR: Okay.

25 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: And then after we were

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701



1 transferred to -- I think U.S. Coast Guard boat until  
2 we reached land.

3           MICHAEL KARR: All right. Did you -- going  
4 back to when you were -- going back to your role as  
5 muster leader A -- going back to your role as a leader  
6 of muster station A --

7           CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

8           MICHAEL KARR: -- describe specific tasks  
9 that you did as a leader.

10          CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Specific tasks? So the  
11 first thing I did was to give away the life jackets for  
12 the people that didn't have any. So we grabbed from  
13 the life jackets post. So we started to give away  
14 while the people from the boat was launching the life  
15 boat.

16          MICHAEL KARR: Okay.

17          CYNTHIA FLORIAN: And tried to keep all the  
18 women in front with the kids.

19          MICHAEL KARR: Okay. Can you describe how  
20 you keep -- how you took attendance of the people that  
21 were there?

22          CYNTHIA FLORIAN: What do you mean?

23          MICHAEL KARR: Well did you have to count or  
24 otherwise figure out if everybody that was supposed to  
25 come to muster station A were at muster station A?

1 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No we didn't count.

2 MICHAEL KARR: Is --

3 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Because they were mixed  
4 from the two boats, so we didn't count the people that  
5 were supposed to be on muster A or B.

6 MICHAEL KARR: So muster station A and B  
7 were mixed?

8 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No, I'm sorry. The  
9 lifeboat, because we have two lifeboats on the  
10 starboard side, so the people were already mixed when I  
11 reached the place, the muster station.

12 MICHAEL KARR: What lifeboat -- muster  
13 station A people go to which lifeboat?

14 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Number one.

15 MICHAEL KARR: And who goes to lifeboat  
16 number 3, from what muster station? Lifeboat number 3  
17 serves what muster station?

18 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: That one I don't know. I  
19 just know my muster station A --

20 MICHAEL KARR: A.

21 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: -- and then we proceed to  
22 lifeboat number one.

23 MICHAEL KARR: Okay, all right, but your  
24 people were mixed. Are you supposed to take  
25 attendance?

1 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes, we are supposed to.

2 MICHEAL KARR: Your supposed to?

3 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

4 MICHAEL KARR: Did you have any sheets of  
5 paper?

6 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No I didn't.

7 MICHAEL KARR: Are you supposed to have a  
8 sheet of paper?

9 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

10 MICHAEL KARR: Can you describe how the  
11 piece of paper did not get into your hands?

12 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Because we are supposed to  
13 get it from the bridge, but then when I reached there  
14 because all the people were already there when I  
15 reached the place because I was sleeping.

16 So, I asked one of the officers, which I  
17 don't know the name because I was only two weeks there  
18 on the boat, but they said there is no list on the --  
19 you don't have to get the list.

20 MICHAEL KARR: So what -- did that officer  
21 tell you what to do without a list?

22 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No, they didn't say  
23 anything.

24 MICHAEL KARR: Right. What did you decide to  
25 do?

1 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: We just counted people to  
2 go in the boat, on number one.

3 MICHAEL KARR: All right.

4 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: To not be crowded and  
5 everybody will sit, nobody was standing, everybody was  
6 in order.

7 MICHAEL KARR: Okay. Did you personally  
8 count the people that went in the boat?

9 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No, we didn't count  
10 exactly, but we just made sure that everybody was  
11 sitting properly and nobody was standing.

12 MICHAEL KARR: Okay, all right, okay.  
13 Anyone have any other questions?

14 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Is there anything that happened  
15 during the course of the evacuation that you felt was  
16 concerning, that maybe should've been done differently  
17 or anything that you saw that was -- that didn't go  
18 very well that you think would help us in our  
19 investigation?

20 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: The thing is that  
21 everything was very fast, so we didn't have like much  
22 time you know to -- because when we heard the alarm,  
23 which is Mr. Skylight, so we just stayed on standby  
24 because something is happening, so we don't do  
25 anything.

1           That's only for, to grab the boats and  
2 everything. But the next one is 7 short blasts, so  
3 that means we have to proceed to the muster station,  
4 but we just heard the one long blast, it was like maybe  
5 after 5 minutes or ten minutes, the Mr. Skylight, so we  
6 didn't have much time because everybody sent already  
7 all the passengers upstairs to the lifeboat station.

8           ██████████ ██████████ Where is your cabin on the  
9 ship? Like, where is your cabin located on the ship?  
10 Is it forward, is it aft, is it mid shift? Is it on  
11 the upper decks, is it on the lower decks?

12           CYNTHIA FLORIAN: It's on the upper deck.

13           ██████████ ██████████ It's on the upper deck. What  
14 deck is your cabin?

15           CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Deck number 7.

16           ██████████ ██████████ Your cabin is on deck number 7?

17           CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

18           ██████████ ██████████ Aft, forward?

19           CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Forward.

20           ██████████ ██████████ Forward, okay. When you heard  
21 the Mr. Skylight and you proceeded from your cabin to  
22 the muster station, at any point while you were walking  
23 to the muster station did you encounter any smoke or  
24 anything that required you to change course and go a  
25 different way?

1 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No.

2 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] No, okay. Do you have any  
3 pictures or videos, like on your cell phone or a camera  
4 while you were onboard or while you were being  
5 evacuated off the ship that you could share with us?

6 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No, I don't have any.

7 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] No? Okay. I don't have any  
8 other questions, thank you.

9 CARRIE BELL: I have one question. What  
10 were you doing after you heard the Mr. Skylight  
11 warning, or alarm, what did you do from that time until  
12 you heard the emergency signal?

13 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: I just stayed in the cabin  
14 on standby because we have to stay on standby when we  
15 hear the Mr. Skylight. We don't have to do anything.

16 CARRIE BELL: So did you consider going down  
17 to see what was going on in the reception area?

18 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Actually, no I didn't have  
19 time because I think after the Mr. Skylight they gave  
20 the one long blast, maybe after five to ten minutes, so  
21 I didn't have a chance to go --

22

23 CARRIE BELL: So you stayed in your cabin?

24 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes, I just stayed in the  
25 cabin.

1 CARRIE BELL: Okay, okay.

2 MICHAEL KARR: Let me follow up on that.

3 What time were you suppose to start work that day?

4 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: 9:45.

5 MICHAEL KARR: Okay.

6 CARRIE BELL: And you said that when you  
7 evacuated the ship that you got in a boat. Did you get  
8 in a raft first and then into a boat?

9 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: In a raft?

10 CARRIE BELL: So you went down the slide --

11

12 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

13 CARRIE BELL: -- and then from there what  
14 did you do?

15 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: We just waited there like  
16 maybe one minute or something and somebody picked us  
17 up.

18 CARRIE BELL: In a boat?

19 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

20 CARRIE BELL: Okay, oh you did say that.

21 Thank you.

22 MICHAEL KARR: Any more questions.

23 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] When you made it shore, okay

24 when you got on the pier, how -- did anybody account

25 for you? Did any approach you, ask for your name, put

1 a bracelet on you?

2 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes they did, a green one.

3 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Do you know who approached you  
4 and took your name?

5 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No I don't know.

6 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Do you know if it was a company  
7 person, if it was a Coast Guard person?

8 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No idea.

9 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] No?

10 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: No.

11 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] It was someone with a list?

12 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Yes.

13 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Okay.

14 MICHAEL KARR: Yes.

15 CARRIE BELL: Can you tell us what your  
16 safety number was, is? Do you know?

17 CYNTHIA FLORIAN: Oh my gosh. Right now I  
18 don't remember. No.

19 CARRIE BELL: That's okay. Thank you.

20 MICHAEL KARR: All right there are no more  
21 questions so I am going to stop the recording and it is  
22 1652.

23 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went  
24 off the record at 16:52)

25



C E R T I F I C A T E

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

DATE: 08-22-16

I hereby certify that the attached transcription of page 1 to 17 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.

  
-----

**NEAL R. GROSS**

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS  
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701