

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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In the Matter of:	*	
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ALLISION WITH STATEN ISLAND	*	
FERRY TERMINAL MAINTENANCE	*	DCA-04-MM-001
PIER AT ST. GEORGE'S,	*	
STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK BY THE	*	
FERRY ANDREW J. BARBERI on	*	
OCTOBER 15, 2003	*	

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Wednesday,  
October 22, 2003

Staten Island, NY

INTERVIEW OF:

CHARLES CUMMO

PRESENT:

ROB JONES, NTSB  
RICHARD GONZALEZ, USCG

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

1  
2 MR. JONES: Okay. This is an interview with  
3 Officer Charles Cummo.

4 OFFICER CUMMO: Correct.

5 MR. JONES: Of the 1-2-0. And if you could --

6 OFFICER CUMMO: Yes, Officer Cummo, Shield  
7 Number 19843, of the 120<sup>th</sup> precinct.

8 I was a conducting, at 14:00 by 22:35 hour  
9 tour. My detail assignment is the Staten Island Ferry  
10 Terminal. I normally patrol the Andrew J. Barberi on a  
11 regular basis, regular five days a week, Tuesday  
12 through Saturday.

13 On that particular day with the accident of  
14 the Andrew J. Barberi, the winds were heavy. The  
15 waters were a little bit more rockier. We had no  
16 problems docking into the Manhattan terminal, itself.  
17 We loaded our passengers on. I believe at  
18 approximately, there might have been anywhere from 15  
19 to 2, 1500 to 2000 passengers. We proceeded back to  
20 Staten Island, St. George Terminal. Normally, I stay  
21 within the upper level, near the concession stand,  
22 because they have a lot of troubles with their patrons  
23 and the workers that, you know, serve food. On that  
24 time, I noted that it was just me and Officer Dover-  
25 Santiago and Officer Downing, which was telling me he

1 was coming back Manhattan from a court appointment that  
2 he had.

3 We might have been in the water anywhere from  
4 15 to 20 minutes. The normal thing for a lot of the  
5 passengers, what they do, they go to the front of boat  
6 and they anticipate the docking. So, they might be  
7 able to get to the train, or the bus or have somebody  
8 waiting to pick them up. So it is a normal thing for  
9 all passengers to be at the front of the boat. Myself  
10 and Officer Dover-Santiago, we are still at, you know,  
11 somewhat center or front of the boat at that time.  
12 There was a deck hand, I don't recall his last name,  
13 his name was Jerry, starting yelling out, get to the  
14 back of the back of the boat, several times. At that  
15 time me and Officer Dover-Santiago, we saw the unusual  
16 large crowd at the front, we thought it was a fight at  
17 first. You know, we were not aware that we were coming  
18 into the pylons or the dock, or itself.

19 MR. JONES: Just if I could interrupt one  
20 second. What level was this at, that Jerry was on?

21 OFFICER CUMMO: This was all at the upper  
22 level. He was on the upper level front end side.

23 MR. JONES: Where the passengers usually  
24 disembark?

25 OFFICER CUMMO: Exactly, correct.

1 MR. JONES: All right. Okay.

2 OFFICER CUMMO: So, again, like I said, he  
3 brought it to our attention, you know, he is yelling  
4 get to the back of the boat. Me and Karen, again, we  
5 are, we proceeded forward, not in a rush, not running  
6 or nothing like that because again we anticipated it  
7 was a fight within the crowd. Then I noticed, as Karen  
8 noticed, that passengers started coming towards us,  
9 running for what reason, again, we weren't under the  
10 influence that we were coming up to the, to the dock,  
11 itself. So, we saw the urgency in people's faces and  
12 their motions by running towards us, again, now me and  
13 Karen, we ran forward. Still not knowing that we were  
14 coming up to the pylons.

15 I think Dover-Santiago, Officer Dover-  
16 Santiago came to her knowledge firsthand, because she  
17 was on the left side of me, she saw the outside and  
18 pylons were coming closer. She brought it to my  
19 attention, and at that time, the same deck hand, Jerry,  
20 started yelling, brace yourself, we are going to hit.  
21 We are going to hit. So, again, at that time, me and  
22 Karen still proceeded forward, grabbing passengers.  
23 Now, I am aware of that is going on. We start pushing  
24 passengers further away, you know, and somewhat of an  
25 orderly fashion. We are trying to gain, you know,

1 their compliance. At that moment, we struck. Me,  
2 Karen and I am sure everybody that was around us, we  
3 were all thrown to the floor, if not into a chairs.

4 At that time, we weren't, we weren't aware of  
5 the severity of the accident, itself. We knew we hit,  
6 and it was a long hit. But, again, we didn't know how  
7 high it was on the boat, itself, because by our first  
8 observation, we could just see the front of the boat.  
9 And a lot of debris on the front of the boat. And we  
10 saw a gentleman in the distance, in the front with a  
11 beam going across his foot. I noticed and Karen also  
12 noticed the uncertainty of the floor, itself. So,  
13 Karen proceeded, which under my direction, told  
14 everybody, just tell everybody to get to the back of  
15 the boat. Her and that deck hand, Jerry, at that time,  
16 started proceeding people to the back of the boat. And  
17 somewhat in a calm fashion at that time.

18 MR. JONES: Still on that same level.

19 OFFICER CUMMO: Still on that same level.

20 MR. JONES: Okay.

21 OFFICER CUMMO: At that time, I went down to  
22 the gentleman, the elderly gentleman at the bottom, at  
23 that time, trying to get him out. But, then I came to  
24 the, you know, I came across the first victim of the  
25 accident, itself and it, it seemed to be, I couldn't

1 say for sure, a female DOA at the time, by  
2 decapitation. I proceeded forward, I got that old  
3 gentleman out. And that is when I had the first glance  
4 of the lower level of the severity of the accident,  
5 itself. You had several casualties of the accident,  
6 and yes, there was, in the immediate vicinity, you had  
7 a couple of DOAs at that time.

8 Karen, again, stayed upstairs with the  
9 passengers, do what she had to do, crowd control,  
10 whatever it might have been. And I proceeded to stay  
11 down below and started to set up a triage, an area,  
12 taking names and making interest to the people that  
13 were conscious enough, in order to get the, their  
14 information in case they did pass out from whatever, it  
15 might have been shock or trauma, whatever it might have  
16 been. There were people down there at that time.  
17 There was, I don't know their names, but it was a black  
18 gentleman and a Hispanic gentleman that were down  
19 there. By my directions, I asked them to sit with the  
20 more severities, the casualties, itself. I was then  
21 approached several off duty officers that were able and  
22 willing to help me set up, so this way when FD and  
23 parametric came aboard, we knew who was going first,  
24 who is already DOA and try to treat them as with the  
25 basic equipment that we had on the boat. Basically, it

1 was just a first aid kit, which was brought to my  
2 attention from a young lady that was assisting a  
3 gentleman that had his legs cut off.

4 MR. JONES: Right.

5 OFFICER CUMMO: We didn't have the backboards,  
6 the neck braces, the splints, the tourniquets, nothing  
7 like that to provide the medical attention that these  
8 people deserved at the time. So, we managed the best  
9 we can with shirts and belts and whatever might have  
10 been.

11 MR. JONES: You mentioned the medical kit, do  
12 you know who brought that down to you or how you got  
13 it?

14 OFFICER CUMMO: I did not see a medical kit.  
15 I, I, it was brought to my attention by that young  
16 lady, we need one.

17 MR. JONES: Okay.

18 OFFICER CUMMO: Nobody came and brought one.

19 MR. JONES: Yeah, okay. The first couple of  
20 DOAs you said, do you know approximately where they  
21 were besides the one that was decapitated?

22 OFFICER CUMMO: Okay. The first, she was the  
23 first DOA that I came across. The second DOA, when you  
24 got to the lower level, adjacent to the elderly  
25 gentleman that I was trying to help, was buried under

1 the debris, lifeless.

2 MR. JONES: Yes.

3 OFFICER CUMMO: Then proceeding forward,  
4 proceeding forward backwards --

5 MR. GONZALEZ: Take your time. Take your  
6 time. This isn't a rush here. Take your time.

7 (Pause.)

8 MR. JONES: And you know we don't even have to  
9 go there. That is, you know, take your time.

10 MR. GONZALEZ: If you can't now, you can't do  
11 it. You only can do what you want. They are not, you  
12 know.

13 MR. JONES: We can go on to other issues about  
14 this. No problem.

15 OFFICER CUMMO: At the time there was, I  
16 counted five, five DOAs and two likelys. Like I said,  
17 there was two DOAs, one was buried under debris, and  
18 the other one partially buried. I couldn't tell the  
19 gender.

20 MR. JONES: Yeah.

21 OFFICER CUMMO: There was a gentleman in that  
22 same vicinity, which had eye socket the side of his  
23 face. It was partially removed. That was to the outer  
24 part of the boat, if you are looking from the back, at  
25 that time, it was the front end, but, it turned out to

1 be the back, when Captain Gansas turned the boat around  
2 and pulled it into slip, that was, to me that was the  
3 back end. So, if you are looking from back end to the  
4 front, like I say, you had the two DOAs, you had the  
5 gentleman with his face ripped off, the young lady, we  
6 already explained. To the right and to the middle of  
7 the boat, you had a gentleman there missing a foot.  
8 Next to him, within the same vicinity of him, there was  
9 a young lady there missing both her legs. And that is  
10 where the gentleman was, he was missing both his legs.

11 To the left of him, was a likely, again, I couldn't  
12 tell you the gender. Her abdomen was open with the  
13 severity of small and large intestines sticking out.  
14 In front of her, working my way to the front of the  
15 boat, there was a gentleman I believe that was face  
16 down in the face, with back injuries, unable to feel  
17 any sensation, but no compounds, no fractures, no  
18 bleeding. Next to him was another, I believe a  
19 gentleman, I couldn't tell you the gender, DOA, laying  
20 face down, leg were separated to an outer part.

21 To the left of him was another young lady,  
22 correction, a gentleman with back injuries, neck  
23 injuries and trauma to the nose. It could have been  
24 cerebral fluids from the nose. Back over to the middle  
25 of the boat, was another gentleman, again, back, neck

1 injuries, blood from nose and ears. Again, could be  
2 cerebral fluids.

3 Working my back further, in the middle of the  
4 boat, was a gentleman laying down, face down, again,  
5 bleeding from mouth, profusely. Not at the time, but,  
6 I believe, likely.

7 MR. JONES: That is all right. We really  
8 don't --

9 MR. GONZALEZ: I would say that is enough for  
10 today.

11 MR. JONES: Yeah, that is plenty. Okay. I  
12 appreciate it, but --

13 Let's go to a different area. You say you  
14 ride the Barberi or --

15 OFFICER CUMMO: Frequently.

16 MR. JONES: Frequently.

17 OFFICER CUMMO: Yes, my steady post.

18 MR. JONES: So, not even, even when you,  
19 during your time with that you are riding the ferries,  
20 you don't switch to other boats, you just ride that one  
21 for your tour?

22 OFFICER CUMMO: I ride that throughout the  
23 duration of my tour. We board that boat at 2:30. I  
24 believe the first one is 1:30. We board, me and my  
25 partner, Karen Dover-Santiago, we board at 2:30. And we

1 remain on that boat until it docks at 21:00 hours. And  
2 that is the last run. And when we come in, we sign out  
3 for the day until 22:35.

4 MR. JONES: Do you know both these captains?

5 OFFICER CUMMO: I don't know them, personally,  
6 but, I am familiar with Captain Gansas and also Captain  
7 Smith due to work environment.

8 MR. JONES: Yeah. Anything to say about them,  
9 just cordial to you or you see them just at glance?

10 OFFICER CUMMO: I mean, if you are asking for  
11 a character, Captain Smith reserve, very quiet, keeps  
12 to himself, very selective to who talks to. Quiet man.  
13 Respectful.

14 MR. JONES: All right.

15 OFFICER CUMMO: Captain Gansas, again,  
16 respectful, enjoys music, very polite.

17 MR. JONES: How do you know he enjoys music?

18 OFFICER CUMMO: Well, I mean, into the  
19 conversations in order to pass some of the time away, I  
20 have, like when there is a layover in Manhattan, we,  
21 like the 5:15 is the next boat, we will engage in  
22 conversations, and, you know, just for time to --

23 MR. JONES: Pass the time.

24 OFFICER CUMMO: Exactly.

25 MR. JONES: Yeah. Okay.

1           OFFICER CUMMO: So, dislikes and enjoys and  
2           stuff like that. But, again, very approachable. Any  
3           questions, I mean, very knowledgeable about the boat  
4           and everything else. On a few occasions he actually,  
5           because it brings it to my attention how the boat  
6           operates on a propulsion instead of, you know, the  
7           older boats being operated with, with a prop, or  
8           propellor. The understanding of how the boat, this  
9           particular class could be operate side to side, front,  
10          backwards. I mean, very knowledgeable about the  
11          harbor. I mean, within our conversations about the  
12          different buoys and I didn't even know there was a  
13          buttermilk in harbor, itself.

14                 MR. JONES: Yeah.

15                 OFFICER CUMMO: I didn't even know what a  
16          buttermilk was, other than the milk that is churned  
17          with the butter.

18                 But, an all around nice gentleman.

19                 MR. JONES: Yes. Okay. You stated when you  
20          left Manhattan, you assumed there was about 1500 to  
21          2000 people.

22                 OFFICER CUMMO: Correct.

23                 MR. JONES: How do you do that benchmark of  
24          numbers?

25                 OFFICER CUMMO: That is a norm. That is

1 pretty much a norm, because that is usually just before  
2 that run is just before like a major rush hour.  
3 Usually when we pull in and do the four o'clock boat,  
4 the 5:15 boat, that is usually when it starts getting  
5 heavier, where we estimate, that particular class could  
6 carry up to 6,000 to 6500 passengers. By a normal  
7 general eye, when we do our patrol to get on that boat,  
8 we patrol all three levels before we station ourselves  
9 at the concession because of due to the upgrade up  
10 passengers getting disgruntled about the cost of the  
11 food or whatever it might be. So, we come to our  
12 realization that this is where we have most of our  
13 problems.

14 MR. JONES: Okay.

15 OFFICER CUMMO: So, by our presence right  
16 there, we eliminate a lot of the argumentative and  
17 everything else. We still get some disgruntles, but I  
18 mean, they move it on.

19 But, we, me and my partner, we usually patrol  
20 all three levels, go to the end and to the end of the  
21 boat and the beginning to the end of the waterway.  
22 Again, we are equipped with these radioactive detectors  
23 and that is a norm for the day.

24 MR. JONES: Radioactive detectors?

25 OFFICER CUMMO: It looks like an old fashion

1 size beeper, and it picks up radioactive material  
2 within the background area.

3 MR. JONES: So is that for 9/11.

4 OFFICER CUMMO: That is for terrorists.

5 MR. JONES: That is 9/11.

6 OFFICER CUMMO: It is terrorist training, yes.

7 MR. JONES: Okay. During the transits back and  
8 forth, do you go up the bridge at all, the pilot house?

9 OFFICER CUMMO: In, in route, yes. Not often,  
10 but every once in awhile, you know, it is a quiet boat  
11 or whatever it might be, I, myself, would go up there  
12 and engage, again, like I said, that is how I came to  
13 know Captain Gansas and also Captain Smith.

14 MR. JONES: Yeah, but, underway. When the  
15 vessel is underway?

16 OFFICER CUMMO: When the vessel is already  
17 underway.

18 MR. JONES: Now is that, do you know the code  
19 to get in that door, into the pilot house?

20 OFFICER CUMMO: Yes, I do.

21 MR. JONES: Okay. Is that standard for the  
22 police officers that are assigned to the vessel?

23 OFFICER CUMMO: I couldn't say if it was or  
24 not.

25 MR. JONES: Okay. It might not be a bad idea

1 if it was.

2 OFFICER CUMMO: Well, it is a good idea so we  
3 are able to get up and down, as often as we need.

4 MR. JONES: Yeah.

5 OFFICER CUMMO: I mean, here is a facility up  
6 there, a bathroom.

7 MR. JONES: Yes.

8 OFFICER CUMMO: That I, I use.

9 MR. JONES: And if, when you have been up  
10 there, you know, on these casual occasions, how many  
11 people have been up there with you, or in the pilot  
12 house?

13 OFFICER CUMMO: Usually there is the captain,  
14 you know, whether it is AC or the head captain and a  
15 lookout.

16 MR. JONES: Okay. Is there any restrictions on  
17 you when they are docking, when they are getting close  
18 to the pier, for going up there? Have you been up  
19 there and they have asked you to leave just because  
20 they were coming closer to the dock and --

21 OFFICER CUMMO: No, it is actually, it is not  
22 requested. I think like, I can only speak for myself,  
23 and my partner, we just, it is a courtesy thing, you  
24 know, it is an detention span that they need in order  
25 to, you know, pull in. And it is our duty also to see

1 the passengers onboard safely and exit the boat safely,  
2 also.

3 MR. JONES: So, you have never been asked to  
4 leave the pilot house, if you had been up there.

5 OFFICER CUMMO: No, never.

6 MR. JONES: All right. The crew members, the  
7 deck hands, do you see their presence around a lot? Or  
8 is it, you know, what is your take on how often you see  
9 the crew members?

10 OFFICER CUMMO: Throughout the course of the  
11 trip, not this particular day.

12 MR. JONES: The voyage, yeah.

13 OFFICER CUMMO: Frequently, like I said, we  
14 usually station ourselves after the boat is on the way,  
15 on the upper level, near the concession, so, we usually  
16 see the deck hand, the two deck hands that are actually  
17 responsible for that level. And on occasion, we might  
18 see a deck hand that might come up from the other, the  
19 lower levels, maybe to get themselves a cup of coffee  
20 just to go back to their stations.

21 MR. JONES: So, for your knowledge, it is two  
22 deck hands per deck?

23 OFFICER CUMMO: Correct.

24 MR. JONES: Okay. And the deck hands on the  
25 lower level, are they assisted by an officer for

1 opening the gates when they dock?

2 OFFICER CUMMO: Again, what I normally do and  
3 my partner, she takes the upper level when they come  
4 on, I usually take the lower level, when the passengers  
5 come on.

6 MR. JONES: Okay. And how about coming off,  
7 now in Staten Island?

8 OFFICER CUMMO: Usually coming off, me and her  
9 were basically at the upper level and like I said,  
10 earlier in the conference, that the passengers usually  
11 proceed forward with the anticipation of docking, so  
12 they can get to wherever location, or designation they  
13 have to go to in a hurry. So, we pretty much, we don't  
14 stand within the middle of crowd, due to our training,  
15 because of gun control and everything else. We don't  
16 want anybody, you know, helping themselves or touching  
17 and everything, so we just keep our distance at that  
18 time, when they unload. After the majority of  
19 passengers unload, then when we say, we deem it pretty  
20 much safe for us, then we will just proceed to the  
21 front of the boat.

22 MR. JONES: Okay. On that day, after, after  
23 the vessel struck, you stayed up on that second level,  
24 you said?

25 OFFICER CUMMO: I was up on the main level.

1                   MR. JONES: Okay. And did you notice the  
2 tugboat that came around to help you?

3                   OFFICER CUMMO: No.

4                   MR. JONES: Okay.

5                   OFFICER CUMMO: That was after I was down  
6 below. And that is when FD and the medics, that is  
7 when I saw people coming onto the boat from the Staten  
8 Island side, and that is when I was actually, not  
9 brought to my attention, but that is when I was aware  
10 of, I saw a tugboat coming to that one side.

11                   MR. JONES: Okay. During the time that the  
12 tugboat came along side, and the vessel got pushed back  
13 into the pier, you were just maintaining, where were  
14 you through that time? Just assisting the passengers?

15                   OFFICER CUMMO: After we struck, that is all I  
16 was, it was, what I believe, I am sorry, the deck hands  
17 were referred to, I was on the lower level, main level.

18                   MR. JONES: Right.

19                   OFFICER CUMMO: Doing, trying to set up  
20 whatever triage I could set up. So, when the  
21 paramedics or the rescue services came on, we --

22                   MR. GONZALEZ: Basically, everything that you  
23 said before, that you went to the lower level.

24                   OFFICER CUMMO: Yeah, I was lower level.

25                   MR. JONES: Right. Did you see any deck hands

1 then, were they assisting you down there on the lower  
2 level?

3 OFFICER CUMMO: I wasn't aware of any deck  
4 hands with me at that time.

5 MR. JONES: Can you, are you, can you readily  
6 identify the deck hands during the day of a regular  
7 transit?

8 OFFICER CUMMO: By face, and mostly by name,  
9 correct, on a first name basis.

10 MR. JONES: But, they have no distinguishing  
11 uniforms or they wouldn't stand out in a crowd if you  
12 didn't know them by face.

13 OFFICER CUMMO: No, they do stand out, where  
14 they usually wear typical, like Dickies blue slacks or  
15 navy blue, like a dark slack with powder blue shirt,  
16 usually with a patch on the left hand side, with that  
17 white and red lettering of Staten Island Ferry Boat  
18 deck hand.

19 MR. JONES: Okay. All right. Now do your,  
20 your partner, you said, was she up on the upper level  
21 when you docked?

22 OFFICER CUMMO: When we docked on the Staten  
23 Island side?

24 MR. JONES: Right, after the accident, after  
25 the impact, and you came around, was she on the upper

1 level?

2 OFFICER CUMMO: She was on the upper level,  
3 like I said, throughout the duration until we docked.

4 MR. JONES: Okay.

5 OFFICER CUMMO: After we docked, I couldn't  
6 say, I mean, I recall her being down on the main level  
7 with me but later on --

8 MR. JONES: Okay.

9 OFFICER CUMMO: You know, after FD and like I  
10 said, the rescue teams came onto the boat, itself, then  
11 it was, then I realized I saw my partner.

12 MR. JONES: And what was her name?

13 OFFICER CUMMO: First name, Karen, with a K,  
14 last name, Dover, D-O-V-E-R, hyphen, Santiago.

15 MR. JONES: Okay. Just, I am looking at that  
16 just, don't have much, too much testimony right now  
17 from people on the upper level, everything, you know,  
18 it just sounds like it was an orderly response, people  
19 wore life jackets, but, it was just good that everybody  
20 got up there, so the fire and police could come in  
21 through the lower level.

22 When were you first aware of the rescue units  
23 coming aboard, while you were still treating injured  
24 passengers?

25 OFFICER CUMMO: I couldn't tell you when we

1 docked, all I remember is looking up, you know, I was  
2 down on the floor, itself and I looked up and I saw,  
3 believe it or not a white shirt, a blue shirt and it  
4 looked like a very large coat at the time and that is  
5 when I realized it was a supervisor, one of ours, with  
6 the police officers plus FD.

7 MR. JONES: That had definitely come after you  
8 docked?

9 OFFICER CUMMO: They were coming from the  
10 Staten Island side, because that was still like, well,  
11 the back end of the boat.

12 MR. JONES: Yeah. Now, at any time did you  
13 realize the structure, the overhead, did it ever come  
14 to your attention that it was unsupported?

15 OFFICER CUMMO: Yes.

16 MR. JONES: And --

17 OFFICER CUMMO: That is the vision when I went  
18 down below, because the older gentleman that was  
19 sitting there, he wasn't injured to the extreme, but  
20 there was a beam going across his foot. I noticed  
21 because the ramp, itself, and the stairway to the lower  
22 level, already has collapsed, and if it wasn't for the  
23 debris overlapping one another, I wouldn't have ever  
24 made it down that way, with that debris there. So, my  
25 first intentions was just to get him out of there,

1 because of the possibility of the floor, the upper  
2 levels coming down. And that is the reason why Karen  
3 and myself realized, to get the patients, I am  
4 referring to, the passengers, themselves, to get to the  
5 back end of the boat, I mean, it gets confusing because  
6 I am saying back end --

7 MR. JONES: Yeah, I know which one.

8 OFFICER CUMMO: But, at one point we were on  
9 the front end and then the final point we are the back  
10 end. So, it might be confusing.

11 MR. JONES: Yeah, it is a little, especially  
12 the damage end, Staten Island end. So you came down  
13 that three, that three passengers stairwell that had  
14 now almost been knocked through.

15 OFFICER CUMMO: It was completely knocked  
16 through.

17 MR. JONES: And that is the one you came down,  
18 along that bulkhead.

19 OFFICER CUMMO: I came down along the debris.

20 MR. JONES: Okay. How long did you stay  
21 aboard after the rescue, the first rescue units and  
22 police came aboard?

23 OFFICER CUMMO: I stayed on that boat until I  
24 was directed by my supervisor to leave that boat. So,  
25 I guess I stayed on that boat, I couldn't even give you

1 a time frame, FD, paramedics are already on. I  
2 assisted with back, you know, backboards, neck braces,  
3 oxygen. I have medical training, myself, so I stayed  
4 where I thought I needed to be and until I was  
5 instructed by a Lieutenant in the 120 to get the hell  
6 out of there.

7 MR. JONES: Approximate time?

8 OFFICER CUMMO: If we docked, I couldn't tell  
9 you how long we were in the water. I didn't even  
10 realize a tugboat pulled us into.

11 MR. JONES: Yes. This is, well, as you all  
12 know, you are the police officers, you do investigate a  
13 lot more than I do, but, the stories we get for the  
14 amount of time, the time span that it took to do  
15 everything, it was actually 23 minutes from the time  
16 the vessel struck, to the time the gates open and fire  
17 and rescue came aboard.

18 OFFICER CUMMO: So, for those 23 minutes, I  
19 was downstairs with two other gentlemen, setting up a  
20 triage.

21 MR. JONES: Yeah, yes.

22 OFFICER CUMMO: And within that time frame, I  
23 stayed on that boat until that boat was cleared of  
24 anything that was, of any person that was living at  
25 that time.

1 MR. JONES: Yes.

2 OFFICER CUMMO: And I basically stayed there  
3 until that roof was actually supported, by FD and also  
4 and they were putting planks and wood to stack it up.  
5 Where it wasn't still deemed to be safe and I had a  
6 lieutenant coming up to me, knowing where I was,  
7 telling me to get out of there. And at that time I  
8 stayed on the boat, to the undamaged side, with the  
9 direction of fellow peers and officers, assisting me  
10 and my, my partner, we needed to do. And we were  
11 instructed at that time, by Chief himself, he was going  
12 to be out there, they appreciate if we didn't address  
13 them, just keep on proceeding forward.

14 MR. JONES: Well, I think that first move of  
15 getting all the passengers back was quite a smart one.  
16 So, you know, that affected the rescue effort and kept  
17 the injured from getting further injured and allowed  
18 the police and fire to respond to those that were  
19 injured and with their safety. So, I think that helped  
20 quite a bit.

21 That is all I have right now, Officer.  
22 Richard?

23 MR. GONZALEZ: I have got two questions. This  
24 is Richard Gonzalez.

25 When you were on the deck assisting the

1 people, did you happen to see Captain Gansas or Captain  
2 Smith down there at all?

3 OFFICER CUMMO: No, I did not see Captain,  
4 neither captain.

5 MR. GONZALEZ: Okay. And same question that I  
6 had, my last one is, how did you know that Jerry was  
7 the one telling the people to go back? How do you know  
8 that was Jerry?

9 OFFICER CUMMO: Well, we have first heard the  
10 command, a very anxious voice, demanding, get back, get  
11 back, get to the back of the boat. That brought my  
12 attention and I looked over to my left and that is when  
13 I saw Jerry, you can't miss Jerry, Jerry is a very  
14 large individual. And he was wearing a powder blue  
15 shirt, with a baseball cap, with dark pants, running  
16 towards us, pushing people along. Again, that was how  
17 it was brought to our attention.

18 MR. GONZALEZ: Okay. Thank you.

19 MR. JONES: Is that it?

20 MR. GONZALEZ: That is it.

21 MR. JONES: Okay. When you are riding the  
22 vessel, how do you know when it is getting close to the  
23 dock?

24 OFFICER CUMMO: Well, it is a 20, 25 minute  
25 boat run. I usually check my watch frequently, to know

1 we are getting closer and closer to the dock. We know  
2 as soon as we pass the Liberty, we are pretty much 10,  
3 15 minutes out. If I can see the Liberty behind me and  
4 I see the Verrazano Bridge, I know we are approaching  
5 the dock within five to ten minutes. That is when we  
6 usually proceed forward. By looking at my watch, by  
7 saying it is 20, 25 minute run, we can pretty much  
8 estimate it. I don't frequently ride the front of the  
9 boat, only when it is needed, necessary to assist the  
10 deck hands to keep them back, during rush hour, because  
11 they have their own protocol, doing what they call  
12 tiebacks. They put a rope going across the back end of  
13 the boat, at all levels, to keep the passengers back  
14 and we usually assist them in order to help them  
15 maneuver themselves to the crowd, just to open and  
16 close the gates.

17 MR. JONES: Yeah. And that is, the tieback  
18 lines in front of those doors there?

19 OFFICER CUMMO: Yeah, well, actually beyond  
20 the door, there are the doors, and then you will have  
21 the tieback line just beyond the door, but on the lower  
22 level, it is just before you get to the door.

23 MR. JONES: Okay. If you weren't looking at  
24 your watch, if you weren't looking at the Statute of  
25 Liberty, the Verrazano Bridge, is there a way, just at

1 night, or you are just not looking out, is there a way  
2 that you can tell when the vessel is getting close to  
3 the, close to the pier?

4 OFFICER CUMMO: We, I usually, like myself, I  
5 usually use my surroundings in order to let me know, I  
6 mean, it is a force of habit. I have been on the boat,  
7 that particular boat for eight months, but other than  
8 just the time frame, but the other possible way of  
9 knowing, which also brings it to my attention when I  
10 look around, you start seeing passengers, themselves,  
11 getting up and then walking to the front of the boat.  
12 And they actually stand on the ramp, on the stairs, and  
13 everything else where they are not directed. They are  
14 actually directed to remain seated at all times. There  
15 is a PA system that let's, you know, not us, itself,  
16 but the passengers know, thank you for riding the  
17 Staten Island Ferry boat, please throw your trash out  
18 in each receptacle. And then also reminding them to  
19 stay off the ramps and off the stairways until we are  
20 completely docked. But, again, passengers are curious,  
21 they like to watch what is going on, so they got up and  
22 they usually proceed forward.

23 MR. JONES: Yeah. I know you say you are  
24 always usually on the upper levels, is there any time  
25 when you are on the lower level, getting close to the

1 dock that you would hear that PA system?

2 OFFICER CUMMO: Yes.

3 MR. JONES: That you can recollect hearing it.

4 OFFICER CUMMO: You can hear from all three  
5 levels. That particular day, I was on that level, but,  
6 yeah, there are days that I do ride frequently on the,  
7 not frequently, but generally ride on the lower level  
8 or the middle level to wherever need is, request is  
9 needed by a deck hand or if we are ready to get off the  
10 boat, ourselves, we usually get off at the lower  
11 levels. Anything that is brought to our attention,  
12 you know, we also have a canine officer that comes on  
13 that boat, not on that particular day, but, she usually  
14 brings the dog and herself at the lower level, so we  
15 usually go to the lower level to greet her, whether it  
16 is the Manhattan side. So, there are times that we do  
17 ride the lower level, and we still hear the same, same  
18 sound, same PA.

19 MR. JONES: Okay, Officer, that is all I  
20 really have right now.

21 OFFICER CUMMO: Great.

22 MR. JONES: Anybody else, Richard?

23 MR. GONZALEZ: No.

24 MR. JONES: No. Okay. That is it.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)