

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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 *
 *

Thursday,
October 16, 2003

Staten Island Ferry Terminal
St. George, Staten Island, NY

INTERVIEW OF:

CHARLOTTE HARVEY

PRESENT: BILL WOODY
MORGAN TURRELL

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TURRELL: Would you give us your full name?

MS. HARVEY: Charlotte Harvey,
C-H-A-R-L-O-T-T-E.

MR. TURRELL: And your last name?

MS. HARVEY: Harvey, H-A-R-V-E-Y.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. And can you tell us what your job on the Staten Island Ferry is?

MS. HARVEY : -- take care of the bathroom.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. How long have you done that?

MS. HARVEY: Twenty three years.

MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, can you tell us yesterday, when you reported to work, tell us when you reported to work and the first or two, tell us --

MS. HARVEY: From the first time I swiped in?

MR. TURRELL: The first time you swiped in, tell us about things that happened before the accident?

MS. HARVEY: I swiped in at one o'clock, no, 12:20, I think it was, 12:20. The boat was tied up at 69th Street. I walked over, and I got on, the boat wasn't going to go out until 1:30 and my co-worker was there, waiting for her time to get off. So, we were

1 just sitting there talking, you know, and we moved
2 around about one o'clock, five after one, something
3 like that. To, four, something like that four, to get
4 ready to load. So, my co-worker and I went upstairs
5 and I signed in. My time is -- to nine. After I came
6 down, I just sat by the door where the rail hits and
7 just watching the people come on. And we went into New
8 York -- -- got into New York and went upstairs -- The,
9 what do you call that deck, the bridge deck.

10 MR. TURRELL: Bridge deck.

11 MS. HARVEY: Yeah, okay. I sat outside --
12 When they loaded, I went back downstairs to my own
13 deck.

14 MR. TURRELL: Which is?

15 MS. HARVEY: Saloon Deck, yes, Saloon Deck.
16 And I went to the back of the boat and I sat until they
17 were fully loaded, because it wasn't rush hour. It is
18 three o'clock from New York. I was sitting there and
19 got the newspaper and I was just glancing through it as
20 we were moving. I relaxed. The water was choppy, up
21 and down. I didn't think nothing of it because I am
22 used to that.

23 So, we were coming in, there was like tourist
24 at the window and other people, and then I heard a
25 roaring sound, grr, grr, like that. That is normal, he

1 is reversing to go to slow down. And then all of a
2 sudden I see these people rushing to the back of the
3 boat. I said, what is going on? So I got up and I
4 looked to the window, and I seen the boat come in
5 sliding like sideways. Oh, my God, so I got up again
6 and I went outside to the back of the boat and I looked
7 over the railing. A lot of people were there. And I
8 seen the boat just hit that concrete and then back off,
9 quick, one, two, three. So I went back inside, and I
10 said there has been an accident. So, I went back
11 downstairs and I went to my floor on -- people were
12 still rushing about, you know, and then all of a sudden
13 I heard "Everybody get your jackets out, everybody get
14 jackets out. There has been a serious accident." So,
15 I just pulled the jacket, what I could find on the
16 floor and I just held it.

17 I went to my bathroom where there were a
18 couple of people in line and I told them, you know,
19 this boat is out of service, you have to leave. They
20 wouldn't leave. So, I just -- put my key in my
21 locker, got my pass and I walked off the boat.

22 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

23 MS. HARVEY: Before I got my badge, I walked
24 to the front and there were two men there, I don't know
25 who they was. They were trying to hold the people back

1 because they wanted -- So I stood at the edge of that
2 rail and I walked back. The ceiling just, everything
3 was -- So he said, you can't go downstairs, Miss, I
4 said, I was downstairs. I don't want to go downstairs.
5 I just want to see. So, then I turned around, just
6 got my badge and I left.

7 MR. TURRELL: Okay. This gentleman who told
8 you you couldn't go down, do you know who that person
9 was?

10 MS. HARVEY: I think he was short, dark hair,
11 like that -- I didn't see any --

12 (Pause.)

13 MS. HARVEY: I didn't see any identification
14 on him. Maybe a passenger was just trying to hold the
15 people back, because they didn't listen. They kept
16 walking -- on the rail, to go down, you know. I think
17 he was just trying to keep them back, you know,
18 because everybody was hysterical, crying and hollering
19 and, you know, screaming, because they didn't know what
20 to do you know.

21 MR. TURRELL: Did you hear any bells or
22 alarms?

23 MS. HARVEY: No.

24 MR. TURRELL: Or announcements?

25 MS. HARVEY: No. One announcement, I think, I

1 don't who made it, when they said, for the passengers,
2 to take the life jackets out, and they said, there is a
3 serious accident. I think they said they hit the wall,
4 hit the concrete or whatever. But, I didn't hear no
5 bells or anything.

6 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Stepping back just a
7 moment, you said, at some point you were up in the
8 bridge deck, up on the --

9 MS. HARVEY: Yes, that was, from New York, I
10 was coming.

11 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

12 MS. HARVEY: I mean, when the boat was leaving
13 New York, I was upstairs.

14 MR. TURRELL: Did you happen to see the
15 Captain or Assistant Captain?

16 MS. HARVEY: No.

17 MR. TURRELL: Did you see any of the deck
18 officers?

19 MS. HARVEY: No.

20 MR. TURRELL: When you were up in the bridge
21 deck, just prior to the accident now, you are up on the
22 bridge deck.

23 MS. HARVEY: I was outside --

24 MR. TURRELL: Did you notice anything unusual
25 going on the deck at all? Did you notice any marks on

1 the decks or any --

2 MS. HARVEY: No.

3 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

4 MS. HARVEY: No.

5 MR. TURRELL: Do you know of any crew member
6 that may have been injured prior to the accident?

7 MS. HARVEY: Before the accident? No.

8 MR. TURRELL: Okay. So, can you tell us from
9 your, how many people, you said it wasn't rush hour,
10 but --

11 MS. HARVEY: It wasn't rush. It was like
12 three o'clock to New York, so we got into St. George
13 about maybe 25 after, 20 after three. Rush hour don't
14 start until four o'clock.

15 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

16 MS. HARVEY: From New York.

17 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

18 MS. HARVEY: Yes.

19 MR. TURRELL: So, in your employment with the
20 ferries, did you ever have a chance to participate in
21 drills?

22 MS. HARVEY: No, no.

23 MR. TURRELL: You were not considered part of
24 the crew --

25 MS. HARVEY: Yes, I am.

1 MR. TURRELL: You are part of the crew.

2 MS. HARVEY: Yes.

3 MR. TURRELL: But, you do not participate in
4 the drills.

5 MS. HARVEY: No, no. They have fire and boat
6 drills. They have -- drills, but I am never,
7 participate in that, no.

8 MR. TURRELL: How often do you have those
9 drills?

10 MS. HARVEY: How long do they have them?

11 MR. TURRELL: How often, how often do they
12 have them?

13 MS. HARVEY: I really don't know. They do it
14 once or twice a week.

15 MR. TURRELL: During those drills that you do
16 not participate in, what do you do?

17 MS. HARVEY: What do I do? Well, go and clean
18 and my bathroom.

19 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

20 MS. HARVEY: That is when I was working
21 mornings. When I am working one to nine, they do the
22 drills after nine o'clock. And I am already off the
23 boat, swiped out and waiting --

24 MR. TURRELL: Okay. Mr. Woody here is going to
25 ask some questions.

1 MR. WOODY: The announcement for putting on
2 the life jackets, was that over the public address
3 system?

4 MS. HARVEY: Yes. I don't know who made it.

5 MR. WOODY: Okay.

6 MS. HARVEY: Some, probably one of the crew
7 members. When I heard, you know, get your jackets,
8 attention, please, attention, please, get your jackets
9 out.

10 MR. WOODY: You heard the words "attention,
11 please".

12 MS. HARVEY: Yes. Yeah. By the way, I knew
13 there was a serious accident, you know -- when
14 everybody was grabbing their jackets from this one,
15 that one, I grabbed whatever I could find on the floor.
16 And after the people were, you know, they didn't know
17 where to turn, what to do. So, after that, I just
18 grabbed the jacket, you know, so I said, they need more
19 to the front of the boat. I know, because they are
20 letting go down, and I wanted to ask somebody, the
21 Captain, what happened. There was water coming in, the
22 floor down below on the main deck. That is why they
23 wanted the people to have their jackets, because
24 probably they were afraid that the boat was going to go
25 down. So, I just, okay, I turned around and just

1 walked. Sometimes later when you talk to certain
2 people they will tell you different things and tell you
3 the truth, especially if you work there, you know, but
4 they didn't want the passengers to know that there was
5 water coming in, you know, because that would panic
6 them more.

7 MR. WOODY: Okay.

8 MS. HARVEY: But, there was a lot of
9 confusion. A lot of confusion.

10 MR. WOODY: Did you see any injured passengers
11 or --

12 MS. HARVEY: No, no, no. They weren't letting
13 you downstairs. When I walked off the boat, when they
14 turned the boat around the other way, they hooked up
15 and I just went right down the ramp and I walked right
16 off the boat, and I stayed by the fence, and then I
17 seen the firemen come, the police come and I stayed
18 there quite awhile. And then I seen the firemen
19 pulling out the bodies.

20 MR. WOODY: Okay.

21 MS. HARVEY: And they just pulled them out and
22 laid them on the sidewalk, not covered, nothing. And
23 they seemed to be all men. So, then I stood there for
24 awhile to see if I could see any more, but then the
25 cops, they chased me, they said go away, go away. You

1 don't want to see this. I said, that is all right,
2 don't bother me, I work there. He said, no, you can't
3 stand there. You have to leave. So, I just walked
4 away and I went in the back office, and told one of the
5 clerks that, I said, if you see -- or whatever, tell
6 them I am leaving, I am going home. That was four
7 o'clock, five minutes to four, because I had swiped
8 out, and I just left. That is it.

9 MR. WOODY: So, you mentioned that there was
10 somebody that you, you couldn't describe, you couldn't,
11 didn't know who he was, or you, who was trying to stop
12 the passengers from going down the ramp.

13 MS. HARVEY: Yes, right. That was on the
14 bridge deck, no, the saloon deck.

15 MR. WOODY: Saloon deck.

16 MS. HARVEY: Yes, saloon deck, yes.

17 MR. WOODY: Do you have any reason why he was
18 doing that? Was that a good idea to be doing that at
19 that time or was it --

20 MS. HARVEY: Well, I knew the ceiling was
21 down, everything was crushed, the railing, the ceiling,
22 because I tried to go down and that is when he stopped
23 me. He said, no, you can't go down.

24 MR. WOODY: Oh, I see, I see, right.

25 MS. HARVEY: Yes. And I said, but I work

1 here.

2 MR. WOODY: You clarified that for me. I
3 understand.

4 MS. HARVEY: Yes.

5 MR. WOODY: I thought that maybe they were
6 trying to get, go ashore and --

7 MS. HARVEY: No, no, no, no.

8 MR. WOODY: Okay.

9 MS. HARVEY: I don't think we had come into
10 the slip yet.

11 MR. WOODY: Okay.

12 MS. HARVEY: We were still in the water.

13 MR. WOODY: Okay.

14 MS. HARVEY: We had backed off. We were still
15 in the water and then when I come back up the rail, on
16 the bridge deck, I just walked to the other end of the
17 boat, because the people were walking that way. And
18 then that is where I was. And I wasn't panicky. I
19 wasn't none of this, because I knew the Captain, you
20 know, ran the boat.

21 MR. WOODY: I have one more question.

22 MS. HARVEY: The best thing to do is get
23 panicky, because you make the passengers panicky.

24 MR. WOODY: On this public address system, you
25 heard what the words were, like you say, everybody get

1 your life jackets?

2 MS. HARVEY: Yes, that is what they said,
3 yeah.

4 MR. WOODY: And did they say anything about
5 the accident, there has been an accident --

6 MS. HARVEY: They just said, grab your
7 jackets, there has been a serious accident.

8 MR. WOODY: There has been a serious accident.

9 MS. HARVEY: Yeah, yeah. They didn't say
10 anything about the water coming in or they hit, but the
11 passengers knew that they hit something because they
12 all were by the window, looking out and they could see
13 that the boat was, with the, with the sound of the boat
14 sliding on the side, the glass was breaking and
15 everything, you know, they knew that, you know, so that
16 is when they started running to the back and screaming
17 and, you know, and I just went and walked to the back
18 and I said, it is all right. There has been an
19 accident, it is all right. It is all right. But, they
20 didn't pay attention, they -- you know, they just --

21 MR. WOODY: I think that is all I have.

22 MR. TURRELL: The Coast Guard gentleman?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Do you remember who it
24 was that told that --

25 MS. HARVEY: --

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Charlotte, do you
2 remember which crew member it was that told you there
3 was water coming on?

4 MS. HARVEY: No. No, I didn't see any water
5 coming on. Because they wouldn't let me, one of the
6 men, I don't know who he was, said that there was water
7 coming in. But, I didn't see it, because they wouldn't
8 allow me downstairs, to the main deck. I couldn't get
9 down there anyway because the ceiling, the whole
10 ceiling had dropped on the --, so I couldn't and they
11 wouldn't allow me to see it, to go down. So, actually
12 I didn't see no water coming in, but when I spoke to
13 the man, whoever he was, it said there was water coming
14 in. That is why they wanted the people to have their
15 jackets.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Was it a crew member?

17 MS. HARVEY: So, they figured that the front
18 of the boat was going to go down. But, within two
19 seconds, when we were wading in the water, the Coast
20 Guard was right there.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right.

22 MS. HARVEY: One boat on one side and the
23 other boat in the back.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But, was this man, was
25 this man one of the crew members?

1 MS. HARVEY: No. No, he was in civilian
2 clothes. He could have been a passenger, you know.
3 What I think maybe he was an uncover cop, coming from
4 New York from work. And he was trying to help the
5 people, you know. But, I didn't ask any, his name, but
6 he had no identification on him, you know. And there
7 was another, thin guy, bald headed guy, he had an
8 argument with one of the passengers. I think he wanted
9 to go and see what was going on, but he wouldn't let
10 him. So, he says, why are you acting like this? Why
11 are you acting like this? Just turn around and go to
12 the back of the boat with the rest of the people and
13 stay there. So, I turned around and I went in my
14 bathroom.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

16 MS. HARVEY: I didn't want, I didn't want to
17 say anything, you know, so. Okay.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Just a couple of
19 questions. You said that you went into the bathroom
20 and told the women who were there that they had to
21 leave. And --

22 MS. HARVEY: There were two women in the
23 stall, yeah, I told them this boat is out of service,
24 there is a serious accident, you have to leave. But,
25 they wouldn't listen to me.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Did they say anything
2 to you?

3 MS. HARVEY: No. They were in the stall and
4 I got my badge and I walked out. Because I didn't,
5 well, if you want to stay in there, go ahead. Every
6 man for himself, you understand when something happens,
7 what am I going to do, go over there and pull their
8 arms and jerk them out? There was no, there were cops
9 there, downstairs, but, they were rather busy. So, how
10 could I get a cop to get them out? So I just left them
11 there. That is all.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No more questions.

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No more.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think we are done.

15 MR. TURRELL: Thank you. And thank you, the
16 NTSB thanks you.

17 MS. HARVEY: Okay.

18 MR. TURRELL: And we may ask you some
19 questions in the future, but, we appreciate your
20 testimony.

21 MS. HARVEY: Okay.

22 MR. TURRELL: Thanks very much.

23 MS. HARVEY: Thank you.

24 MR. TURRELL: Okay.

25 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)